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ANALYTICAL INVESTIGATIONS
CONCERNING THE
CREDIBILITY OF THE SCRIPTURES,
AND OF THE
RELIGIOUS SYSTEM INculcated in THEM;
TOGETHER WITH A
HISTORICAL EXHIBITION OF HUMAN CONDUCT

DURING THE SEVERAL DISPENSATIONS UNDER WHICH MANKIND
HAVE BEEN PLACED BY THEIR CREATOR.

BY
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THE EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY, ETC.

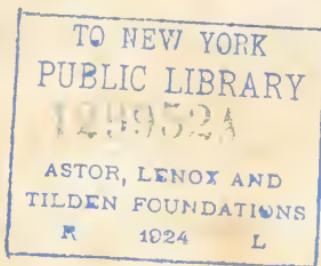
IN TWO VOLUMES.

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NOTICE TO THE READER.

Before reading this Volume, the reader is requested to put a star (*) to the end
of the twenty-third line, of page 102, and at the foot of the page, to write—
* *see page 503, for note.*

INVESTIGATION
OF THE .
INTELLECTUAL AND MORAL PHENOMENA ATTEND-
ING THE ADVENT OF THE MESSIAH;
AND
PROMULGATION OF THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION.

THE next subject in our progressive view of Jehovah's dispensations toward mankind, is the literal advent of the Messiah; that illustrious personage of whom such glorious things had been foretold by the ancient Jewish prophets, and of which we have given a brief outline in Vol. I. page 219, &c.

As the purposes to be accomplished by the actual coming of the Messiah involve certain considerations respecting the dispensations of Jehovah towards mankind that are wholly inexplicable to us, there is some difficulty in making a proper exhibition of the general subject. As it includes the combination of incomprehensible purposes with perfectly intelligible operations, it is impossible to exhibit them in any single harmonious point of view, and hence from overlooking this circumstance, so many persons are to be found who having become bewildered by the presumption of ordinary theological exposition on the subject, have too often rashly attempted to cut a knot they were unable to untie.

The plan I have adopted to investigate this subject will be to treat of it in a two-fold manner. *First*, by considering it according to the artless narrations of the Evangelists, as exhibiting the mere history and teaching of Jesus Christ during his ministry on earth; and *secondly*, by estimating what amount of incomprehensible purposes may be involved in his functions as the Messiah, whether as taught by himself or afterwards by his Apostles. By this mode of proceeding, I apprehend we shall be able to separate the inscruta-

ble matters connected with the mission or functions of the Messiah, from those that are plainly announced to mankind for the regulation of their action whether intellectual or moral.

The reader will therefore please remember, that in the ensuing pages we shall in the first instance confine ourselves merely to the events of the literal history of Jesus Christ. After we have done with this part of our subject, we shall then point out those particulars that are involved in purposes of Jehovah that we apprehend to be entirely inscrutable to mankind.

As we have already introduced the predictions of the prophets announcing the future coming of the Messiah, it is not necessary that we should refer to them any further than may be necessary to introduce our subject according to the peculiarity of those circumstances under which his advent actually occurred, and which we can do in a very few words.

Of all those prophecies by which Jehovah was pleased to make known his future purposes as involved in the coming of the Messiah, there are none that so directly enable us to rightly appreciate this subject as the second and seventh chapters of the prophet Daniel, which we will presently shew was the very basis upon which Jesus of Nazareth commenced the exercise of those external agencies, which his disciples afterwards carried out to a full completion by their individual ministrations. The light afforded by these prophecies will enable us to understand the expositions of the evangelists in a most forcible and simple point of view, and which if not read with a distinct reference to these prophecies of Daniel, either leaves the relations of the evangelists involved with an unnecessary obscurity, or gives rise to the maintenance of false and presumptuous speculations.

In the second chapter of Daniel, an interpretation is given of a remarkable dream of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, concerning a great image which appeared to stand in a plain before him, and which was then destroyed in an incomprehensible manner. This image, composed of four different metals, according to the interpretation of the prophet, represented four different kingdoms, which should successively exercise a mighty dominion in the earth. These kingdoms evidently were, first, the Babylonian empire; secondly, the Medo-Persian empire; third, the Greek empire under Alexander the Great and his four successors, and the fourth was that of the Romans, which he represents as being far more powerful than either of those preceding it, but which nevertheless contained elements of weakness combined with an iron strength.

In the forty-fourth verse of this chapter Daniel uses these remarkable words: “And in the days of these kings,” (it ought to have been kingdoms) “*shall the God of heaven (Jehovah) set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, this kingdom shall not be left to other people, (i. e. there shall be no other kindom to succeed it as was the case with the preceding kingdoms) but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, (i. e. the four that preceded it)* AND IT SHALL STAND FOREVER”

In the seventh chapter of Daniel, a vision of similar symbolic signification is given, representing the four kingdoms we have just enumerated under the semblance of four powerful and ferocious wild beasts. During the vision in which these beasts representing kingdoms appeared to the prophet, he sees Jehovah himself whom he designates as the “Ancient of Days,” seated on the throne of the universe, whilst “thousand thousands and ten times ten thousands ministered before him.”

While the prophet was regarding this magnificent vision, he saw “*one like the (properly a) son of man,*” (i. e. a personage in human form) “*come with the clouds of hearen, and they came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him: and there was given him (i. e. the son of man) dominion, and glory, and A KINGDOM, that all people should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and HIS KINGDOM THAT WHICH SHALL NOT BE DESTROYED.*”

The remainder of the chapter further illustrates the subject in that point of view in which we have already presented it to the reader. It announces the establishment of a *great kingdom* which Jehovah would ultimately cause to prevail throughout the earth, manifestly that *kingdom* of the Messiah, concerning which the inspired prophets had predicted such glorious things.

These remarkable prophecies designate in an eminent manner the political constitution of things in the world preceding, or at the time when the Messiah’s kingdom should be set up, and especially as commencing in the day of Roman domination, to which fact as the anticipated means of a deliverance from Roman oppression, the expectation of the Jews was eminently directed during the latter years of their national existence. Daniel’s prophetic period of seventy weeks had further prepared them as to the time they were to expect the advent of this glorious prince, and the great kingdom to be established among them, of which so many other glimpses had been given by other prophets of the Old Testament.

When therefore the time had arrived for the manifestation of the Messiah, the angel announced the fact to the Virgin Mary in the following terms: (*Luke* i. 31, &c.) "Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a son and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and *of his kingdom there shall be no end.*"

The inspired prophets had taught the Jews to expect that Elijah the prophet would appear on earth as the precursor of the Messiah, and prepare the way for the reception of this great personage. Whether they rightly interpreted the words of that prophecy we cannot but doubt as to its literal signification, for John the Baptist, who the New Testament states to have fulfilled this office, is regarded merely as having done so, *in the spirit and power of Elijah.* He is abruptly introduced to us in his ministerial capacity, as coming forth from the wilderness of Judea as a preacher of righteousness, proclaiming at the same time that the Messiah was near at hand. The peculiar phrasology of John in making this annunciation was expressly based on the prophecy of Daniel as just quoted. He came saying, "repent ye for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (*Math.* iii. 2.) Or in other words, that the Messiah's kingdom, or kingdom of heaven's appointment as predicted by the prophet Daniel was about to be established on the earth.

To have a clear apprehension of the object and bearing of the ministry of John the Baptist towards the Jewish people, we must recall the reader's attention to their actual moral and intellectual condition at that time. The Jews, infatuated in the institutions of their will-worship, (see Vol. I. p. 478,) then regarded themselves as the especial favorites of the Almighty, in virtue of their descent from the patriarch Abraham, with whom Jehovah had made an express covenant that was perfected afterwards under the dispensation made known to them at Mount Sinai, through the ministry of Moses. By this covenant which was made available to every Jew through circumcision, and other ritual institutions of the Mosaic economy, the Jews considered they enjoyed their peculiar relation to Jehovah so absolutely, that though he might punish them for their disobedience, yet their covenant relations with him were perpetual,* and that they would necessarily inherit the blessedness of

* This doctrine is very distinctly stated in 2 *Maccab.* vi. 12—16; where after having related certain calamities under which the Jews had suffered, the author then goes on to remark: "Now I beseech those that read this book that they be

the Messiah's kingdom in virtue of their being the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

But at the time that John the Baptist came preaching that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, the Jews had entirely departed from the covenant requirements of the laws of Moses. We have already shewn in a previous chapter, that they had not only divested the laws of Moses of all spirituality, but they had so added to them by perverse and far-fetched conceits, that their religious observances were mere ritual formalities of human will-worship, that wholly disregarded the righteousness and moral perfection that Jehovah required from them, and which permitted them to live in any manner that pride or voluptuousness might suggest.

John the Baptist directly assailed this theory of the Jews as constructed upon their descent from Abraham. (*Matt. iii. 8, 9.*) "Bring forth," said he "fruits meet (*i. e.* consistent) with repentance; and think not to say within yourselves we have Abraham to our father, &c. And now the axe is laid at the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down (*i. e.* will be hewn down) and cast into the fire."

John thus directly attacked the theory of the Jews as being the favorites of Jehovah, either in virtue of their descent from Abraham or through the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic economy. For by calling on his followers to seek the favor of the Almighty only through works of righteousness, he plainly set aside the foundations of Jewish presumption as based on the ritual and ceremonial observances of the Mosaic covenant, and thus he prepared his hearers to receive that full exposition of moral doctrine afterwards promulgated by Jesus of Nazareth.

Though John was commissioned of Jehovah to precede the Messiah, and apprise the Jews of his actual approach, he did not know the individual he thus announced, but it had been communicated to him that upon whomsoever he should see the spirit of God descending, that person was the Messiah. Hence when Jesus of Nazareth was baptized by John, some supernatural appearance,

not discouraged for those calamities, but that they judge those punishments *not to be for destruction but for a chastening of our nation.*

"For not as with other nations whom the Lord patiently forbeareth to punish till they be come to the fullness of their sins, so dealeth he with us.

"Lest that being come to the height of sin, afterwards he should take vengeance of us:

"*And therefore he never withdraweth his mercy from us,*" (*i. e.* totally.) "*And though he punisheth (us) with adversity, yet doth he never (utterly) forsake his people.*"

whether a defined light, or what else we know not, was seen by John to hover over Jesus of Nazareth like a dove hovers, (not in the form of a dove as in our translation) and a voice was heard as if from heaven, saying, "*this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.*" After this exhibition there could be no doubt on the mind of John who was the Messiah, and he therefore pointed him out as such with the remarkable words, "Behold the lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world."—*John i. 29.*

In a very short time after this event Jesus also commenced to preach, saying, "Repent ye for the *kingdom of heaven* is at hand," *i. e.* is about to be set up or established, and he gradually traversed the land of Judea and Gallilee preaching every where as stated by the evangelists the "*gospel of the kingdom,*" *i. e.* the "good news" that the *kingdom of heaven* as prophesied by Daniel, was about to commence its auspicious dominion. This phraseology is constantly maintained throughout the writings of the evangelists, and is always to be understood as denoting that spiritual kingdom the Messiah was to establish on the earth, and which was to increase until all other kingdoms should fall before it. This kingdom abstractedly is to be considered as extending itself into the future world as the consummation of Jehovah's ultimate purposes with mankind, but such a view is not essential to a correct notion of what Jesus of Nazareth intended men should understand by the *setting up* of the kingdom of heaven; for as recorded by the evangelists, he always spoke of it as a kingdom set up or commenced in the present world. Hence those numerous parables illustrating the principle or growth of the kingdom of heaven, that are altogether inconsistent with any other exposition than that it signified a kingdom in the earth set up among mankind as they are at present constituted, but which evidently implies also, that it should continue to endure after the judgment of the last day.

That this proclaiming the kingdom of heaven, or kingdom of God, as it is otherwise called, and expounding its nature and requirements was a most important part of Christ's personal ministry, must be evident to every one acquainted with the writings of the evangelists. They represent him as preaching concerning the kingdom of heaven from first to last, but if any one has overlooked this circumstance he may appreciate it by examining Cruden's Concordance under the heads of *kingdom of God, kingdom of heaven, his kingdom, and my kingdom;* the references being entirely too numerous to be introduced here. It is important however, to a

right comprehension of our Saviour's mission, that the subject be properly appreciated.

Though John the Baptist had openly announced Jesus to be the "*Son of God*," (*John* i. 29—34,) and though Nathaniel and his earliest disciples recognized him as such to be the Messiah, (*John* i. 49,) yet Jesus himself did not directly assume that appellation in his earlier addresses to those who heard him preach. He appears in the first instance to have only informed them that "the reign of the kingdom of heaven" was at hand, and as such he called upon all men to repent, *i. e.* not to depend for salvation upon the ritual institutions of the Mosaic law, but by forsaking their evil ways and living righteously in view of a future judgment, which he taught them would be held at the end of the world upon all who had ever lived, at which time the wicked should be forever rejected, while the righteous should be made the inheritors of an everlasting kingdom of holiness and happiness. In his teaching or exhortation on these subjects, he reasoned only from the Old Testament Scriptures, and enforced his instructions by parables which exhibited the reasonableness of his teaching, by familiar illustrations which every one could understand and apply to the regulation of his own intellectual or moral action.* Hence the observation made by those who heard him preach, (*Mark* i. 22,) that he spoke as one having

* Our Saviour's mode of preaching by parables, under the influence of peculiar sectarian views, has been sometimes put in such a light as to render his practice in this particular altogether absurd, for by a misapprehension of *Mark* iv. 12, it has been assumed, that he purposely spoke to the people in such a manner that they should not understand his doctrine, whereas nothing is more contrary to the fact. It is true however that *Mark* has stated this discourse of our Saviour so briefly, that it is far less intelligible than the relation of *Math.* xiii. which removes all ambiguity.

The plain matter of our Saviour's discourse as above alluded to was this. He was speaking to the people concerning the kingdom of God or heaven, that was to be established by the Messiah, and to illustrate its character, he made use of a variety of parables or familiar illustrations concerning its nature and growth. But his more intimate disciples or apostles were surprised that he did not rather preach dogmatically to the people concerning himself, for such is the plain inference of *Math.* xiii. 10: "Why speakest thou to them in parables?" *i. e.* why do you not speak to them directly concerning yourself. To this he replied that they as his more immediate disciples could bear such discourses, since they were in a manner familiarized to a more correct view of the Messiah's kingdom, but that the mass of the people who were impressed with the ordinary Jewish belief as to the temporal dignity of the Messiah and the kingdom to be established by him, could not at present bear a simple exposition of the truth, for they were blinded by the false notions that they held upon that subject. Therefore, says he, I speak to them in parables, *i. e.* moral apologetics—that prepare and instruct them concerning the nature and growth of the kingdom of heaven, by which hereafter they may be fitted to receive the true doctrine concerning the Messiah, for this alone is all they

authority, and not as the scribes, *i. e.* he made no reference to any ancient rabbis or elders as sustaining his teaching. His doctrines stood only upon what he urged from the Old Testament Scriptures as the requirements of Jehovah, or as matters of moral equity that had a plain common sense bearing on the understanding and conscience of all who heard him.

At the same time that he was thus instructing the Jews, he performed many miraculous cures upon such infirm and disabled persons as happened to be present, which ought to have impressed every one who witnessed such things with the conviction, that he who had such power must have been sent by Jehovah, for never had any one exhibited such evidence of a divine commission since the beginning of the world. But instead of reasoning correctly on this subject, most of the Jews only expressed amazement, and said, (*Math. xiii. 54, &c.*) "Whence hath this man this wisdom and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary, and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?"

Gradually Jesus began to assert he was expressly commissioned of Jehovah to discharge the office he had assumed, and that he had been instructed of God as to the doctrines he was to communicate to mankind. Finally he taught them there was no other salvation but through him, that men must not only believe him to have been sent by Jehovah, but that they must rely upon his power to save them by doing whatever he required from their faith or their obedience. If they did so, he promised he would raise them from the dead at the last day, and receive them into the enjoyment of that KINGDOM "*prepared for the righteous from the beginning of the world.*"

As confirming the doctrines he thus taught of being the Saviour of mankind, he asserted his power to forgive human sin; which in the first instance seemed to be a most startling assumption, until he shewed by an exhibition of supernatural power in healing bodily diseases by his simple word, (*Mark ii. 5,*) that in asserting an au-

can bear, *i. e.* profit by at the present time. Hence the evident meaning of *Mark iv. 33*, "And with many such parables spake he the word unto them *as they were able to hear it.*"

Why they were unable to bear the true doctrine concerning the Messiah, was from the infatuation of their will-worship and speculations, for he asserts this positively in *Math. xiii. 13—16*. Our Saviour's object therefore in teaching by parables, was to instruct them as far as they would receive the truth, and not that he might be unintelligible to them.

thority to forgive sins, he did not use language that was unsusceptible of sensible proof.

In the ordinary discourses which Jesus made to his disciples or to the people, he constantly spoke of Jehovah as his *Father*, and of himself as the *Son*, thereby implying his being the *Son of God*, (*Psalm ii. 7.*) though he very rarely used the latter expression. Most commonly he spoke of himself impersonally as the *Son of man*, a term however synonymous with that of *Messiah*, and directly deduced from the prophecy of Daniel. (chap. vii. 13.)

As a further consequence of his being the *Son*, or *Son of God*, he asserted he had the power of introducing unto his father's house or kingdom, all those who would receive him in that character. This phraseology we shall hereafter shew implies that most important doctrine of *adoption*, through which all believers in Jesus Christ are authorized to call on Jehovah as *their Father*, in the full confidence that he regards them as *his children*.

In accordance with this doctrine our Saviour required his disciples to accomplish the utmost amount of moral perfection. As being the children of God they were to strive to be like him. "Be ye perfect for your father which is in heaven is perfect." What he taught on this subject is particularly inculcated in his celebrated sermon on the mount, (*Math. v. &c.*) which contains a full summary of all he ever taught his disciples concerning their moral conduct.

As respected the institutions of the ceremonial law as observed by the Jews, he openly disregarded them. He ate without washing his hands, as well as with persons considered to be unclean, he observed no fast, and taught his disciples to disregard the Jewish distinctions of clean and unclean food. In a pointed manner also he slighted their notions concerning the observance of the sabbath, not only by healing the sick on that day, but by openly directing them to carry away the beds upon which they had been laid, which was a direct violation of what the Jews esteemed to be both the letter and spirit of the law.* He justified his proceeding in

* There is an eminent instance of our Saviour's pointed disregard of the Jewish notions concerning the observance of the sabbath, as stated in *John ix. &c.* respecting the cure of the man born blind, which is overlooked by most readers of the New Testament, in consequence of their ignorance of the rabbinical teaching on that subject. In this miraculous cure our Saviour (verse sixth) made a *mixture of clay and spittle* with which he anointed the eyes of the blind man. This mixture was the great offence to Jewish doctors and bigots, as it was done on the sabbath, (verses 14, 15, 16, 24,) and such is the overpowering infatuation of will-worship, that our Saviour's disregard of their precept on this subject, far outweighed the

these cases, first, by saying the sabbath had been made for man, and not man for the sabbath, and secondly by claiming to be Lord of the sabbath, *i. e.* as being one who had a right to dispose of it as he might see fit. His whole conduct plainly shews he designed its entire abrogation, for he has not left a single precept concerning its observance even in that modified sense in which the christian world suppose it ought to be still regarded.

As the doctrines taught by Jesus of Nazareth plainly intimated an entire disregard to the institutions of Moses, his proceeding soon drew upon him the direct hostility of the Jewish authorities, which became still more intense when he reproached them with their perversions of the commandments of Jehovah, through that system of will-worship which we have shewn had gradually arisen among them, and which had altogether changed the simplicity of the system originally instituted by Jehovah, into a scheme of mere rites and formal observances of human appointment.

But in order to have a distinct apprehension of the circumstances involved in this opposition of the Jewish rulers to Jesus of Nazareth, as well as to shew what were the true principles of the religious or moral system promulgated by him, it is necessary to shew the comparatively imperfect nature of the Mosaic institutions independent of any corruption of them by the Jewish teachers. For Jesus did not propose any reformation of the Jewish economy, he evidently contemplated its entire abrogation, whether as regarded its code of moral requirements, or its ceremonial institutions. To demonstrate this matter it will be necessary to estimate these two subjects separately, and first of the moral code established by the Mosaic economy.

The moral law as exhibited in the ten commandments and other collateral enactments of the Jewish Dispensation, consisted of certain positive commands or prohibitions, such as, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not commit adultery, &c. Thou shalt honor, *i. e.* support or cherish thy father and mother, &c. But though these precepts are very emphatic in their expression, yet the grosser classes of crimes only are expressly named, lesser offences, though of the same character, in not being specified and condemned by formal denunciations were therefore comparatively

performance of a miracle as the testimony that he came invested with power from God. The reader who will refer to our observations on the rabbinical observances of the sabbath, (Vol. I. p. 487, &c.) will at once perceive that our Saviour in mixing clay on the sabbath did it purposely in disregard of the frivolous principles established by the rabbis as to the mode in which the sabbath should be kept.

overlooked or disregarded both by the rabbis and the people at large,* though pious individuals probably understood the subject in a truly spiritual manner.

This Mosaic code of morality, *as a mere code*, Jesus of Nazareth evidently proposed to set aside altogether as consisting of mere precepts and prohibitions, for he substituted in its place the operation of an intellectual principle which not only comprehended whatever was required or forbidden by the positive commandments of the law of Moses, but which also included all shades of difference, all modifications of crimes and offences, or of righteous action, that were similar in their natures however different in degree. Hence he taught that the moral action of his disciples was to be regulated not by a literal obedience to the several distinct prohibitions of the law of Moses, such as thou shalt not kill, steal, bear false witness, &c. but by the all comprehensive principle, **THOU SHALT LOVE THY NEIGHBOR AS THYSELF**, *i. e.* you shall act towards him as you would desire him to act towards you, which not only necessarily includes a prohibition of murder, theft, adultery, false witness, &c. but every lesser degree of such offences. The completeness of this moral rule must be evident to every one on estimating his proposed conduct towards others, by his own conscience that must approve or condemn any one acting in a like manner to himself. For by whatever degree of offence any man would estimate such conduct from another person, so he could equally estimate the moral turpitude of his actions to other people by a standard it was impossible he could ever mistake. By the adoption of such a principle as this for moral government, it becomes evident that the code of positive commandments or prohibitions as embodied by the law of Moses, becomes *as a mere code* altogether superfluous.† The law of *loving our neighbor as ourself*.

* Lightfoot, vol. iii. preface, page xiii. &c. vol. xi. 107, &c. gives abundant proof of this fact.

† Some persons perhaps may not rightly appreciate this matter by supposing that the enactments of the ten commandments positively forbidding theft, murder, adultery, &c. were much more emphatic than the rule of doing to others as they would be done by. But that they misjudge the subject will be evident by asking them, in what manner were the sins of murder, theft and adultery punished under the law of Jehovah? As offences against human society they were punishable by temporal pains and penalties as they are now with us. But as breaches of Jehovah's commandment as the God of the Jews, there is no particular punishment assigned. If then, morally speaking, they were to be hereafter punishable by Jehovah as being infractions of the ten commandments, why should they be regarded as less punishable under the law that judges of their enormity by their being violations of the principle, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

selves as instituted by Christ, not only forbids every thing expressly forbidden by the law of Moses, but it comprehends the whole principle of human conduct so absolutely, that the imagination cannot conceive of any offence towards mankind that is not under its influence to such a degree, as to prevent the possibility of mistaking the subject of right conduct in any particular whatsoever. And not only so with things forbidden, but with every thing to be done by mankind; for all acts of mercy and kindness are equally required by this law of love by the necessary inference of doing good to every one *as we should desire to receive of them in our necessities.* Upon this latter point there can be no doubt, for Christ himself in that view that he has given us of the day of judgment in *Math. xxv. 34—36*, wherein the righteous are accepted on account of their *humanity and benerolence*, he also represents others as being condemned for having been *regardless of the sufferings of their fellow men.* Not that this would be the only cause of men being accepted or condemned by him, but *pro tanto* as far as it was the requirement of Christ that we *should love one another.*

That the Jews misunderstood the principle of the system taught by Jesus of Nazareth is very clear from the history of the first acts of his ministry, for he evidently alludes to an imputation having been cast upon him, that his system released men from the observance of those obligations that had been required by Moses and the prophets, and from which he vindicates himself by an explanation of the operation of the principle taught by him, which is entirely misapprehended by most readers of the New Testament from its having been wrongly translated. The passage to which I allude is in the sermon on the mount, (*Math. v. 17,*) where he tells the multitude, “think not I am come to destroy the law or the prophets, I am not come to destroy,” (as we perceive had been charged to him,) “*but to make them more full;*” not *fulfil*, as in our translation, but *more full, comprehensive and sweeping in their operation.* (*Locke, Reason. Christ. 14.*) This he exhibits most clearly from the twenty-first verse to the end of the chapter by shewing that men should be judged not only for committing the grosser acts of murder, adultery, &c. as forbidden by the law of Moses, but even for cherishing the *desire or inclination* to commit such offences.

At the same time that Christ imparted this admirable principle or rule for human conduct, he enjoined also upon his disciples the observance of two other moral principles which have been very differently understood among different christian sects. I allude to

Math. v. 33—42, in which all oaths are forbidden, and all resistance to the injustice or insults of other men.

That all swearing or oaths are here forbidden, I fully agree with the Society of Friends, and I apprehend the reason is perfectly intelligible. Christ requires his disciples at all times and under all circumstances to speak the truth, and consequently they are ever responsible before God, as to the right manner in which they may act in that particular. The recognition of an oath however, supposes that men under this solemn adjuration will speak the truth which they would not do otherwise. The practice therefore of administering oaths, indirectly teaches men that falsehood is of small moment as compared with perjury, and hence many persons do not hesitate to say what they know to be untrue, who yet would not take an oath on the subject. Such a condition of things is utterly contrary to christian perfection, which requires truth under all circumstances. All kinds of swearing or oaths therefore have been forbidden by Christ. Upon the same principle, as we shall shew hereafter, the sabbath was abolished by him, *viz.* that men are to live holily every day alike, and not better on one day and less religiously on another.

With respect to the supposed injunction that Christ requires us to submit without resistance to all manner of violence and injustice, it is impossible that we can regard the passage in question otherwise than an oriental phraseology, which inculcates the greatest amount of rational forbearance under injurious treatment, and repression of revengeful feelings. But that there was to be no limitation to christian endurance in such particulars, is incredible. Such absolute submission would subjugate the moral and religious portion of society altogether to the wicked and licentious: for since we have no promise that the righteous shall be protected by the providence of God in such matters, it is downright presumption for any one to assume that because Jehovah has the power, that therefore he will exercise it.

As I think it important that the misinterpretation of this passage of the New Testament be more fully shewn, I refer the reader for some further remarks on the subject to our Appendix, Art. No. 8.

Having now shown the obvious principle by which the code of moral observances under the Jewish dispensation were superseded, we will now in the *second place*, shew, that the ceremonial institutions of that economy were in like manner abrogated by the substitution of an intellectual principle commensurate with the all

comprehensive obligations of the moral rule appointed by Christ,
“*Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*”

The original and universal purpose of Jehovah in the creation of mankind, as we have repeatedly shown, was, that as intellectual and moral free agents, they should attain to their perfection by their own voluntary action. But mankind as imperfect creatures undergoing probation, were as such continually liable to offend against the laws prescribed by God for the regulation of human conduct. Provision therefore was made for their infirmity in two eminent particulars. *First*, as communicating assisting grace to those who were striving after perfection, and *secondly*, by providing a mean through which any penitent transgressor might be assured that his disobedience or sin towards Jehovah was forgiven him.

In the first place, the pious Jew who earnestly sought after perfection, received grace from Jehovah through his prayers and strict observance of all ceremonial institutions appointed by him. For in complying with such requirements as being express commandments of God, they necessarily would obtain all the blessings promised to the obedient.

In the next place the penitent Jew, sorrowing for any breach of God’s law of which he may have been guilty, presented himself before Jehovah at the tabernacle with an animal sacrifice, which the priest as the appointed mediator between the penitent and Jehovah, laid upon the altar where it was consumed. After having done this the penitent withdrew under the full assurance that his sin was forgiven, and he again was in a state of reconciliation with his God.

If any one will consider these two appointments it must be perfectly clear that grace to assist, as well as forgiveness of past sin, were simply obtained by or through the exercise of *an intellectual reliance upon, or FAITH in, Jehovah’s promises* that he would assist or pardon all those who complied with his institutions.

It was not that there was any efficacy in them *opere operato*, but as acts of *religious faith*, for it must be abundantly clear that neither the ceremonial observances of the law, nor the sacrificed animal, nor the mediatorial act of the priest, could have any inherent virtue in themselves to accomplish such results.

But through a habitual compliance with these ritual institutions of the ceremonial law of Moses, the Jews in the process of their intellectual development, if they rightly exercised their understanding, would thus be insensibly prepared to transfer their faith from its connection with external institutions, to a purely intellectual *act of faith*, i. e. a reliance upon Jehovah’s promise that he would

communicate grace, or would forgive sin to all those who would devoutly seek such favors from him through the intervention of the Messiah, who it was announced to them would be the medium of communication between Jehovah and mankind.

Hence there was no intellectual difficulty as to this matter with any intelligent Jew who believed Jesus of Nazareth to be the Messiah, for as it was only the institution of Jehovah that gave any efficacy or profit to the animal sacrifice or mediatorial act of the priest, so there could be no difficulty whatever in comprehending that Jehovah could in like manner extend grace or pardon to mankind, simply in virtue of their faith or reliance upon his word, as promised to all who would seek him through Jesus Christ, who as the Messiah had accomplished personally whatever was essential to his functions in that capacity.

It would be unnecessary to enlarge upon this view of the subject by any further parallels between the sensible teachings of the ritual institutions of the Jewish ceremonial law, and the application of the mere intellectual principle of faith in Jehovah's promise, as instituted under the Christian Dispensation. The broad principle must be evident to the least consideration, that as the ritual services of the Mosaic institutions were only profitable to the Jews in virtue of their faith, as relying upon the appointments of Jehovah, so in the more intellectual development of Christianity, this efficacy or profitableness was offered to mankind through the mere intellectuality of their faith as to Jehovah's promise, detached from any external act in connection with it.

As we shall hereafter treat on this subject at length in our exposition of the principles of the Christian Dispensation, it will be unnecessary to say any thing further on the present occasion. We therefore return to the personal history of Jesus of Nazareth.

The astounding relation of the miracles performed by Jesus of Nazareth, and the singular purity and simplicity of the doctrines taught by him, spread far and wide among the people of Judea and Galilee, who followed him in crowds as his disciples, wondering at what they heard and saw, and ready to exclaim on all occasions, is not this (person) the son of David? Is not this (person) the Christ? or more doubtfully: when the Messiah cometh, will he do more miracles than this man? Yet his influence upon them though far greater than is commonly supposed, was less than ought to have been anticipated; partly because he did not act according to their misapprehension as to what they supposed the Messiah came to accomplish, and partly because the priesthood, elders, and scribes

whom they regarded as their religious guides and instructors, universally opposed Jesus as teaching doctrines contrary to the system of will-worship, elaborated by them out of the law or institutions of Moses, but which they esteemed to be the actual appointment of Jehovah.* Wholly disregarding through this infatuation, the numerous miracles that Jesus was constantly performing, and which was unexampled in any former period of the Jewish Dispensation, the priesthood and rabbis absurdly required before they should believe in him, "a sign from heaven," that is such a stupendous miraculous recognition of him on the part of Jehovah as would be sufficient to overpower the most stubborn incredulity. This was in fact requiring to be believed as free agents from the responsibility of exercising their intellectual capacities in making right conclusions for themselves, for which they were fully competent if they would only honestly reason on what they actually heard or saw.

But our Saviour having already done what was abundantly sufficient to convince any reasonable man on the subject, met this absurd demand with pathetic reproaches for the stubbornness of their unbelief. He compared their incredulity with that of the people of Nineveh, who had believed the preaching of Jonah, though he performed no miracle, he spoke of the Queen of Sheba, who had made a long journey to see Solomon on account of the reputation of his wisdom, while he, more wise than Solomon, was disregarded by them. He further affirmed that if the heathen population of Tyre and Sidon had heard his doctrine and seen his miracles, they would have been converted to him. Nay that the same thing might be even predicated of Sodom and Gomorrah, and hence his observation, that a more merciful scrutiny would be held concerning their conduct at the day of judgment, than upon the Jews of that generation.

But the Jews, being completely entangled in that system of will-worship which we have already described as having originated in superstitious and far-fetched conceits concerning the obedience due to the institutions of Moses, as well as by one sided views

* The christian world have been greatly misled in their estimate of the true character of the Jewish rulers and rabbis at this time, by a misapprehension of the term *hypocrite*, which was frequently applied to them by our Saviour. This term however was not used in the modern sense as implying a dissembler who is conscious of the falsehood of his position or assertions, but it signifies one so entirely bigoted as to be regardless of the manifest inconsistency of his reasoning or objections. I apprehend the most generally correct translation of the word in the New Testament would be "*inconsistent bigot*."

The various senses in which the term *hypocrite* has been used in the gospel, has been noticed by Dr. Samuel Clark in his Sermons, iii. 195, &c. x. 232.

of matters intimated to them by the prophets concerning the Messiah's kingdom, could not comprehend how any one representing himself to be sent from Jehovah, should thus directly disregard those positive commands or institutions which they considered had been appointed in the laws of Moses for their observance throughout all generations. This circumstance was the greatest stumbling block to the Jews, and it was a plausible one at first sight when we consider the dogmatical character their religious system had assumed in consequence of overlooking certain remarkable peculiarities in the revelations Jehovah had made them, which if properly estimated, ought to have induced them not to have given their system that dogmatical character. Thus it is very true that Moses had announced certain things to be "a perpetual institution, an everlasting ordinance among you in all your generations," &c. The literal sense of these words would have been undoubted, had not the Scripture itself given plain intimations that these terms everlasting, perpetual, &c.* ought not to be always considered in their absolute sense, by having expressly stated there should be a time when another system should supervene upon the Mosaic institutions. In the first place, Moses himself implied this when he said, (*Deut. xviii. 15, &c.*) The Lord thy God shall raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thy brethren *like unto me, to him shall ye listen*, &c.† David had said in *Psalm ex. 4*, that the Messiah was constituted of Jehovah a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek, intimating thereby an abrogation of the Aaronical

* It is not necessary to illustrate this matter by any critical references concerning the use of the term *forever*, as employed in the Scripture writings. Any Hebrew Lexicon under the head of בָּרוּךְ or בָּרוּךְ, will be found sufficiently explicit. Cruden's Concordance under the word *forever* will be all that is necessary to the English reader.

† As the Jews of later times have contested the application of this prophecy to the Messiah, and have determined that it only relates to those inspired prophets who appeared among them, such as Isaiah, &c. it is necessary we should confute their error on this point, as it is a matter of very important bearing in the controversy between the Jews and Christians.

The expressions of Moses (*Deut. xviii. 15-19,*) are apparently very clear: "Jehovah thy God will raise up unto thee A PROPHET, (not prophets) from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, *like unto me*, (i. e. in official position as a lawgiver,) unto him ye shall hearken," &c.

That this likeness to Moses consisted in his being a legislator, is evident from the testimony of the Jews themselves, for they do not recognize any of their prophets *to have been like Moses*. Thus Ezra, or whoever it was that added the last chapter of Deut. says verse 10, evidently written long after Moses, "*And there arose not a prophet since in Israel LIKE UNTO MOSES, whom Jehovah knew face to face*," &c. It is therefore clear from the above passage that the *likeness to Moses*, stated in *Deut. xviii. 15, 18*, was not exhibited by any of the inspired Jewish prophets. The

priesthood, which circumstance of necessity implied an entire change of the Mosaic institutions. The prophet Jeremiah also (*chap. iii. 16*) announced that the time should come when the Jewish people "shall say no more, the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, neither shall it come to mind, neither shall they remember it, neither shall they visit it," &c. The same prophet also in chapter *xxxii. 31—34* says, "Behold the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Judah, &c. not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers," &c. *i. e.* in the wilderness through Moses.

If the Jews therefore had fairly estimated the bearing of these remarkable passages, they would have comprehended that the terms everlasting, perpetual, &c. as applied to the Mosaic institutions, were not to be considered in an absolute sense, but that there would come a time in the providence of Jehovah, when the Mosaic institutions would cease to be observed by his express direction. And therefore if they had with honest impartiality duly regarded these direct revelations of the Scripture, they could not have rejected Jesus of Nazareth and the system promulgated by him, on the ground of his doctrine being incompatible with the perpetual obligations of the Mosaic institutions. If they had regarded the

likeness therefore was to be manifested by a prophet who should, like Moses, be a *legislator*.

Another very important consequence to the correct exposition of these verses is the confutation of the Jewish doctrine that as the law from Mt. Sinai was delivered in the thunders and fires that accompanied Jehovah's speaking to the people, so they contend that nothing less than a similar exhibition of the majesty and presence of Jehovah can justify them to omit the observances of the Mosaical institutions.

But the correct exposition of *Deut. xviii. 15, 16*, expressly forbids their requiring any such similar exhibition, for Jehovah in promising to raise up for them a future legislator *like to Moses*, assigns as his reason why he would raise him up from among them, (*of thy brethren*,) that it would be so done in conformity to what they themselves had formerly desired from him at Horeb, (*Exod. xx. 19*,) where they said to Moses, "*speak thou to us*, and we will hear; *but let not God speak with us, lest we die.*" Therefore says Jehovah, (*Deut. xviii. 17, 18*,) "They have well spoken that they have spoken;" or in other words, I will therefore not again appear to them in the splendor of my majesty as at Horeb, but "*I will raise up (hereafter) a PROPHET from among them of their brethren like unto thee, and I will put my words in his mouth*, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass that whoever will not hearken unto my words, which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him."

The verses that follow the 19th verse, have no connection with it. It applies only to that prophet who was to be *like Moses*. The verses that follow are evidently applicable to the general class of prophets or exhorters, (see Vol. I. 204, &c.) and not to those whom Jehovah would send under the influences of a divine commission; for the instruction given, is, as to how the Jews should ascertain persons *not to be prophets sent by Jehovah*.

subject in this light, they would then have been able to estimate the amount of evidence exhibited by Jesus of Nazareth, whether by miracle or fulfillment of ancient prophecy, as determining the fact whether he was or was not that Messiah so long announced by the prophets. They however bigotedly adhered to their established dogma that the Mosaic economy was to last forever, and refused to consider those portions of Scripture that were anomalous to such a construction. The consequence was they resisted every thing brought forward to convince them of their error, and they finally prevailed as they thought, when they caused Jesus to be put to death, whereby the Scriptures which they blindly held in their hands were literally fulfilled as predicted by the prophets.

The only intelligible ground that the Jews could have taken to justify so unreasonable a proceeding, as far as I can appreciate their conduct, seems to have been, that as they believed at the time of our Saviour's advent in magic and demoniacal agencies, so they might have imagined that the miracles performed by Jesus of Nazareth and his disciples, were permitted by Jehovah that he might try them, as was intimated by the statement made by Moses in *Deut. xiii. 1—3, &c.*

"If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and gireth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass whereof he spoke unto thee, saying, let us go after other gods which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, for the Lord your God proreth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your hearts and with all your soul."

But the Jews must have been miserably blinded in their intellectual perceptions if the preceding verses could be supposed applicable to Jesus of Nazareth and his disciples, for they did not teach that they should forsake the God of their fathers and worship another God; they alone urged men to glorify Jehovah, and by their instrumentality the worship of Jehovah has been carried to the ends of the earth.

Long previous to the advent, the Messiah had been distinguished among the Jews by several different *synonymes* derived from various passages of the Old Testament prophecies. He was called the Son of God, from *Psalm ii. 7.* Son of David, from *Jerem. xxiii. 5, 6.* King of Israel, from *Psalm ii. 6—9.* The Holy One of God, from *Psalm xvi. 10;* but none of these appellations did Jesus of Nazareth publicly assume to himself, though when incidentally applied to him by others he never rejected them. The term Son of

Man, which he ordinarily employed when speaking of himself, was as eminent a synonyme of the Messiah as any other term, though seemingly overlooked in its application by the Jews, probably on account of its humility. Yet this was the very term by which he was designated by the prophet Daniel in that important vision of which we have given some account (Vol. II. p. 7) where the Messiah as *a son of man* receives from Jelovah "*an everlasting kingdom*," or in other words the kingdom of heaven's appointment.

It is a remarkable circumstance in the history of Jesus of Nazareth, that though he expressly told his immediate disciples that he was the Messiah, yet for some time he forebade them to communicate that information to other persons, (*Math. xvi. 20*,) and most cautiously he abstained from saying any thing whereby it might appear to the Jewish public that he directly claimed to be that personage. In Samaria, however, he explicitly told the woman at the well near Sychar, (*John iv. 26*,) that he was the Messiah, and which we must presume he also admitted to be the fact in his after discourse with the men of that village. But in Judea he carefully avoided any assumption of being the Messiah until his last and triumphant entry into Jerusalem, which took place a few days only before he was put to death.*

What the motive of Jesus of Nazareth may have been in thus avoiding any public assumption of being the Messiah, we are not informed by the writers of the New Testament; but the evil spirits or devils appear to have appreciated it, and hence they continually proclaimed him to be "*the Holy One of God*," *i. e.* the Messiah; while he as continually ordered them to be silent. These remarkable particulars have been I apprehend explained by that most excellent man, the celebrated John Locke, in his valuable treatise on the Reasonableness of Christianity, where he infers with the greatest plausibility, that the evil spirits were not as is commonly supposed, compelled by a divine influence to give an involuntary testimony to the fact of Jesus being the Messiah, but that they did so from a malicious purpose. By Christ's commanding them to keep silence, it is sufficiently clear they acted contrary to his purposes.

From these circumstances we perceive that Jesus of Nazareth, notwithstanding the great miraculous power he had the ability to exercise whenever he pleased, yet, through some necessity involved

* This apparent unwillingness of Jesus of Nazareth to assume the character of the Messiah, has been very distinctly noticed by Robert Hall, the celebrated Baptist preacher; see his works i. 296.

in his official position as the Messiah, he was required to accomplish his earthly career under all the natural infirmity of mere human nature. He was therefore, as such, exposed to all the privations and troubles of human life as any mere man, and he could only avoid any obstruction or persecution, by a resort to those merely natural means of which any ordinarily wise or prudent man might avail himself under similar circumstances. As it appears therefore to have been essential to his functions as the Messiah, that he should personally submit to the condition of a mere man in every particular, so it would seem that if he had openly avowed himself to be the Messiah, he would have been arrested by the Jewish rulers before he had accomplished the work he came to perform, and which he alone knew when he had completed what was required of him.

It was to defeat this purpose therefore of being unrecognized as the Messiah until his proper work was accomplished, that Locke supposes the devils were so forward in proclaiming him to be the Messiah, for as he observes, “Can we imagine these unclean spirits were promoters of the gospel, and had a mind to publish to the people the deity of the Saviour? Who can entertain such a thought? No, they were no friends of the Saviour, and therefore desired to spread a belief of him that he was the Messiah, that he might by the envy of the scribes and pharisees be disturbed in his ministry and be cut off before he had completed it. And therefore we see our Saviour forbids them to make him known, as he did his disciples themselves for the same reason.”

In perfect conformity with these views of Locke, we find that when Jesus of Nazareth had accomplished what he deemed necessary respecting his personal work among the Jews, he then resolutely proceeded to Jerusalem, telling his disciples at the very same time, (*Luke xviii. 31—33,*) “Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully treated, and spit upon, and they shall scourge him and put him to death: but the third day he shall rise again.”

Though the evangelists inform us his disciples did not comprehend what he meant in predicting such things of himself, yet it was no new communication, for on various occasions previously, he had made them a similar relation, as well as intimated to them there was some condition of things involved in his personal suffering, that should be the means of obtaining blessedness or salvation to all

mankind. Thus he had stated, (*John* iii. 14, 15,) "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be *lifted up*, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." Again, (*John* viii. 28) "When ye have *lifted up* the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am he," &c. Also (*John* x. 15, 18,) "*I lay down my life* for the sheep. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself," &c. And (*John* xii. 32,) "If *I be lifted up* from the earth I will draw all men unto me," by which prediction he intimated says the apostle, "what death he should die;" *i. e.* that he should be crucified.

While Jesus of Nazareth was performing his last journey to Jerusalem, and continually increasing the number of his disciples through the excellence of his doctrines and brilliancy of his miracles; the priesthood and civil rulers of the Jews had become alarmed at the amount of influence he had obtained among the people. On being informed of his having raised Lazarus from the dead, they immediately summoned their council together to determine upon the course to be adopted towards him, which in their apprehension required some measure of a very decided character. For, said they, (*John* xi. 47,) What are we about; this man is deluding the people by the exhibition of many (false) miracles, and if we let him alone as we have hitherto done, he will assuredly excite the people to an insurrection against the Romans, who will then crush us by their superior power and reduce the nation to an abject state of submission.

In the first instance, the council appear to have been perplexed as to how they should put a stop to the influence of Jesus of Nazareth among the people, since they could not criminate him for any breach of the laws. But while thus puzzled as to the course they should adopt, Caiphas the high priest, cut the knot at once, by saying substantially, (*John* xi. 49, 50,) Your deliberations on this matter amount to nothing. Our plain course is to have this Jesus of Nazareth put to death, whether it can be done legally or not, nor is it worth while to estimate the merits of such a proceeding by any refinement of reasoning. It is expedient that this individual (whom they regarded to be an impostor) shall be put to death, and not be suffered to live and occasion a revolt among the people against the Romans, which will be attended with a loss of the lives of great numbers of persons, and perhaps with the utter ruin of our national institutions.*

* According to our present copies of John's Gospel, this unprincipled advice of a bigoted, or at least unscrupulous high priest, is stated (*John* xi. 51, 52) to have

The council having approved of the course recommended by the high priest, then determined to have Jesus of Nazareth put to death, as being the only available mode of getting rid of him. They had hardly come to this resolution when Jesus entered Jerusalem as it were in triumph, accompanied by a numerous body of disciples, who under the enthusiasm excited among them by his miracles and doctrines, and now *with his express approbation*, they loudly proclaimed him to be the Messiah. Their theory on the subject however, undoubtedly was like that of the other Jews, that he was *king* Messiah, and that he would soon commence with the temporal deliverance of Judea from the Romans.

In a few days after, pursuant to the resolution of the Jewish council as above stated, Jesus was privately arrested at night by the officers of the high priest without any resistance whatever on his part, though at the same time he informed Peter, (*Math. xvi. 53,*) that if he had sought deliverance from the Jews he could have had (instead of twelve disciples) twelve legions of angels to aid him.

On being brought before the high priest and council, they endeavored to find some direct charge against him, by which he might be impeached to the Roman government as instigating the people to revolt against their authority,—but failing in this matter, they laid hold upon his acknowledgment that he was the Messiah, as if it implied all the consequences which flowed from their own theory, that when the Messiah came he would deliver them from their subjection to the Romans.

been a prophecy suggested by the spirit of God as signifying the vicarious death of Jesus of Nazareth for the sins of mankind. But that these verses are interpolations is evident from the falsity of the statement contained in them, which represents that Caiphas “*as being high priest that year, spoke not of himself but prophesied.*”

Now there is not a single passage in the whole Old Testament that ever recognized the high priest to have uttered a prophecy on any occasion whatever, while the verses in question imply that the high priests ordinarily did so *ex officio*. We have however on the contrary distinctly shewn (Vol. I. pp. 199, 212) that Jehovah never made any communication to the Jewish people through the priesthood *officially*. His appointed agents on such occasions were always *the prophets*, who were essentially laymen. We have therefore every reason to conclude the verses in question to be an interpolation, as containing an assertion altogether contrary to our knowledge of Jehovah’s recognized mode of proceeding.

As this unscrupulous high priest in advocating an iniquitous measure, used a phraseology accidentally susceptible of another interpretation accordant with the theory of Christianity, I apprehend some fanciful person ignorant of the real character and functions of the Jewish high priests, recorded his conceit on the subject in a gloss on the margin of a manuscript, which was afterwards incorporated into the text by a copyist who supposed it ought to be thus inserted.

On the ground of this assumption they brought him before Pilate. He however saw nothing in what was reported to him of Jesus to justify such a charge, and probably regarding him merely as an enthusiast of considerable popularity among the nation, he immediately proposed to liberate him as the individual whom the Romans, by an act of grace, were in the practice of releasing to the people from condemnation of death, on the recurrence of every passover.

In this measure Pilate was vehemently opposed by the rulers and priests of the Jews, not only from their hatred of Jesus of Nazareth whom they considered to be an impostor, but they were evidently desirous that a certain Barrabas should be the one released to them by this act of grace. This individual was doubtless a religious fanatic of personal estimation among the Jews at this time, who had been engaged in some seditious tumult against the Roman authorities in which lives had been lost, and for which *he and others concerned with him* were then lying in prison under condemnation of death. (*Mark xv. 7.*) The very circumstances however that made Barrabas popular among the Jews had determined Pilate to put him to death, and to carry his purpose in this particular, he made repeated attempts to induce the Jewish people to accept the release of Jesus of Nazareth, against whom he entertained no resentment.

This proposition of Pilate was loudly approved by the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth, of whom there appears to have been a considerable body present, and who by their expostulations in his behalf, as concurring with Pilate's own inclination, would have been successful in obtaining his release had not the priestly faction changed the principle by which the selection was to be determined, for instead of the release being made upon the ground as to which of the two was most acceptable to the Jewish people, the priesthood put it upon the issue that if Pilate released Jesus of Nazareth, it would be because he was inimical to the authority of the Emperor Tiberius. For, said they, if you release this Jesus of Nazareth who is instigating the people to rebel against the Romans by pretending to be King Messiah, you are manifestly "no friend to Caesar. Whosoever maketh himself a *king* (*i. e.* among the Jews) speaketh against Caesar." (*John xix. 12, &c.*) Pilate confounded by this expostulation, and fearful of a tumult, (*Math. xxvii. 24,*) arising among the people through the influence of the priesthood, if he persisted in his proposition to release Jesus of Nazareth, and for which he would have been personally responsible, at last unwilling-

ingly ordered Barrabas to be released to them, and directed Jesus to be put to death in compliance with the clamor of the Jewish authorities, who charged him with attempting to excite an insurrection against the Roman authority. At the same time however, to shew his unbelief as to the truth of this accusation, Pilate called for water and before the people symbolically washed the blood of Jesus from his hands, (*Math. xxvii. 24.*) saying “I am innocent of the blood of this just (*i. e.* innocent) person, see ye to it.”

But Pilate was evidently exasperated in having been compelled to release Barrabas, and therefore to insult the Jewish authorities for the mortification forced on him in that particular, he appears to have laid hold of the opportunity to shew his spite and contempt of them as a people, by affecting to now regard Jesus as being actually their king. This notion was perhaps suggested to Pilate by the fact, that Jesus then stood before him wearing an old tattered purple robe, with which he had been contemptuously arrayed by Herod in derision of his pretensions to be the Messiah. (*Luke xxiii. 11.*) Being in this guise Pilate ordered his soldiers, after having treated him as *king of the Jews* with mock ceremonials of royalty combined with insults, to then scourge him as if he was a mere slave and afterwards crucify him; a punishment ordinarily inflicted only on the basest criminals. Pilate to complete this insult to the Jewish people, then put a superscription over his head on the cross stating “THIS PERSON IS THE KING OF THE JEWS;” and when the chief priests who felt the insult, requested him to alter the phraseology of the superscription, (*John xix. 21.*) he contemptuously refused to change it, saying, “what I have written I have written.” Pilate’s treatment of Jesus therefore was not dictated by any malice towards him personally, but proceeded from a desire to insult the Jewish people, or their rulers, for having compelled him to release Barrabas.*

* Though the generally prevailing opinion of the christian world is, that the two persons crucified with our Saviour were mere highwaymen or robbers, I cannot see any ground to justify such a conclusion. That they are called so in the evangelists is evident, but is this phraseology from their own opinion concerning these men, or only according to that of the Romans? John says (chap. xviii. 40,) that Barrabas was a *robber*, (*λῃστης*) and I do not doubt but that he was so called by the Romans, but that the Jews regarded him as such is utterly incredible in the fact that the priests and people earnestly sought his release from Pilate. The other evangelists merely state Barrabas to have been a person who had been engaged in some popular tumult or insurrection in which life had been taken, and for which he and *others with him* (*Mark xv. 7; Luke xxiii. 19.*) lay in prison under sentence of death. My opinion, which is sustained by many eminent commentators, is that *these others* thus mentioned, were the individuals who were crucified

Jesus of Nazareth by the malice of the priesthood and rulers of the Jews, having been thus brought under condemnation of death by the Romans, was led off by them to the place of execution under a guard of soldiers, who probably feared a rescue, for it appears they were followed by a great company of his disciples who loudly bewailed his condemnation, (*Luke xxiii. 27,*) and who afterwards returned to their homes (*Luke xxiii. 48, 49*) "smiting their breasts," and making lamentations concerning what they had witnessed. This they did not only from their sympathies with the personal sufferings of one whom they believed to have been at the least a prophet sent from Jehovah, but they were also filled with astonishment on account of the miraculous darkness that hung over the land, and the violent earthquake that occurred while he was affixed to the cross.

After remaining in the state of death during parts of three days, Jesus then rose from the tomb and appeared to his disciples, telling them that henceforth *all power was given him both in heaven and earth*, and at various times during the lapse of forty days ensuing, he discoursed with them concerning things pertaining to that *kingdom of God, or of heaven*, which he had come to establish on the earth. Or, as it is stated *Luke xxiv. 45, &c.* "Then opened he their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures," (*i. e.* as to what had been predicted of him and the kingdom he was to establish as announced in the Old Testament,) "and said unto them thus it is written, (*i. e.* in the Old Testament,) and thus it behooved the Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead on the third day. *And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, among all nations*, beginning at Jerusalem: *And ye are witnesses of these things*: And behold I send (*i. e.* will send) the pro-

with our Saviour. They were therefore neither robbers nor immoral men, but were enthusiasts or fanatics like those who afterwards appeared among the Jews under the name of Zealots, of whom Josephus gives such fearful accounts, and who he also expressly terms *λησται*. I apprehend they properly were what we should now call *guerrilleros*.

The acknowledgment that the penitent robber made (*Luke xxiii. 41*) "that we suffer justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds," does not necessarily imply moral guilt, but that they suffered according to the laws of all countries in having been concerned in an insurrection against an established government.

I therefore think that the persons crucified with Christ were enthusiasts who were sufficiently well instructed in the Jewish religion of that day, and that while one of them entertained the ordinary prejudices of the Jews against Jesus of Nazareth, the other a better disposed man and better instructed in the Old Testament, either from what he heard from our Saviour or from what he saw, became convinced at that late hour that Jesus was the Messiah, and then made the memorable confession, "Lord remember me when thou comest to thy kingdom."

mise of the Father (*i. e.* an effusion of his spirit) upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." When this miraculous power should be communicated to them, they were directed to then go forth and proclaim to all nations of men whatever they had either seen or had been taught by him, baptising all converts to an open profession of faith and obedience to him as a Prince and Saviour through whom they could only obtain the future salvation of God. To further encourage his disciples in preaching these doctrines, he promised to be with them in a miraculously helping manner *to the end of the (Jewish) age.*

Jesus having now accomplished the purposes for which he had been born into the world, then ascended in a visible manner to heaven, leaving his disciples to await that miraculous assistance he had promised them, by which they would be qualified for the work committed to their charge.

Ten days after his ascension, the Jewish feast of Pentecost was celebrated, and while the one hundred and twenty disciples were assembled together in some particular house at Jerusalem, the promise of Jesus (*John* xiv. 16, 17, 26) was fulfilled by the descent of the holy spirit upon them,* (*Acts* ii. 1, &c.) by which their minds being enlightened with a perfect remembrance of all they had previously seen or had been taught of him, (*Luke* xxiv. 45, 46; *John* xiv. 26; xv. 26, 27,) they then came out boldly before the Jewish people and openly proclaimed Jesus of Nazareth to be the Messiah, vindicating their doctrine on the subject by references to the prophets of the Old Testament, and announcing the conditions under which salvation was thus offered to mankind by Jehovah through Jesus as being the Christ. In the discharge of this ministry under the miraculous influences of the holy spirit, they were enabled to communicate these important doctrines in the different vernacular languages spoken by the various Jews, who from all parts of the civilized world, were then assembled in great numbers at Jerusalem to celebrate the great festival of Pentecost.

So effectual was the preaching of the apostles on this occasion, that we are informed (*Acts* ii. 41) three thousand persons immediately embraced the doctrines thus promulgated to them. In a few

* That this effusion of the holy spirit was upon the one hundred and twenty disciples, and not upon the apostles *exclusively*, is the prevailing opinion of all the better instructed commentators. See for instance, Lightfoot viii. 48, 118; Mosheim Comment. i. 364; Macknight on Epistles; Prelim. Essays i; Bloomfield Greek Test. *in loco*. Neander Planting, &c. 19.

days more, the disciples are enumerated as being five thousand men, and presently afterwards (*Acts. vi. 7*) we are informed, that a multitude of the priests also had become converts to the doctrine that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah.

As there is nothing stated in the Acts that gives a distinct view to ordinary readers of the Scripture, as explaining the numerous conversions that so immediately followed the first preaching of the apostles, most persons seem to have fallen into the notion that they were converted by extraordinary influences of the spirit of God which overpowering Jewish incredulity, compelled them as it were to recognize him as the Messiah, whom a few weeks previously they had urged Pilate to crucify as an impostor. But as such a view of the subject is wholly anomalous to all other recorded proceedings of Jehovah with mankind, and has led men into no small practical error, it is important to appreciate this subject correctly.

The principal cause of misapprehension on this matter proceeds from the unfounded notion that our Saviour's actual ministry among the Jews had little or no influence upon them. The contrary to this however is very evident from the evangelists.* Our Saviour's miracles and doctrines had made a very deep impression on a numerous body of the Jewish people in favor of the opinion that he was either a prophet sent from God, or that he was actually the Messiah. Hence they heard him gladly, (*Mark xxii. 37*) and followed him wherever he went in great numbers, and would if he had permitted them, have proclaimed him king, *i. e.* king Messiah. (*John vi. 15*.) It is nevertheless true they were extremely perplexed by the circumstance that his conduct was altogether different from what they anticipated ought to be attempted by him as the Messiah; yet as there was no getting over the fact of his miracles and the purity and excellence of his moral doctrines, they con-

* It is scarcely necessary to establish this matter by references, yet as it has been hitherto disregarded, I may as well call the reader's attention to the following prominent considerations. Besides the twelve apostles, there were seventy other persons who had devoted themselves to preaching our Saviour's doctrines, who were everywhere received and accommodated by the people at large, (*Luke x. 1-17*.) From *John ix. 22*, we learn that the disciples of Christ had so multiplied, that the Jewish authorities resolved that all who would acknowledge him should be expelled from the synagogue. And when he made his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, such was the concourse of his disciples, that the Pharisees made the observation, (*John xii. 12-19*.) that all the world (*i. e.* of the Jews) had gone after him, and therefore though they had resolved to arrest him and put him to death, yet from fear of the people, *i. e.* as his disciples, (*Math. xxvi. 5; Mark xiv. 2; Luke xx. 19*.) they were compelled to do so secretly, lest an insurrection should be the consequence.

tinued to follow him in great numbers avowedly as his disciples, and awaiting the proper occasion when they anticipated he would at last openly take a stand in the nation as the Messiah, and lead them on to victory over their Roman oppressors. Though his followers were in a manner stupefied by the fact of his being put to death, yet even under that circumstance, the fact of the miraculous darkness that hung over the land at the time of his crucifixion, the earthquake that shook Jerusalem, and the rending of the veil of the temple when he yielded up his spirit, all seemed to shew that Jehovah visibly sympathised with *him*, who, on his late triumphant entry into Jerusalem, had openly claimed to be the Messiah.

While they were in this state of perplexity, the annunciation of his resurrection from the dead was widely made known among them, by the apostles and other persons who had actually seen and conversed with him, and as the body of his followers became more and more convinced of that fact, so their prior belief that Jesus had been sent of God, revived to an overwhelming readiness to believe whatever he had previously declared concerning himself.

That a considerable number of persons adhered together as the avowed disciples of Jesus, from the time of his crucifixion until the day of Pentecost, is evident from the circumstance that one hundred and twenty of them are mentioned as being assembled together on a certain occasion, (*Acts* i. 15,) and on another, that there were five hundred met together when Jesus made a visible exhibition of himself to them.—*1 Cor.* xv. 6.

From the circumstances therefore as above stated, we distinctly perceive that a great amount of intellectual preparation to receive Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, existed among the Jewish people prior to the miraculous exhibitions of the day of Pentecost, so that when the events of that day actually occurred, we can readily comprehend the effect that followed, where five hundred persons at least among the multitude then assembled at Jerusalem, openly testified their personal knowledge as to the fact of his resurrection from the dead to thousands of people, many of whom had previously witnessed the miracles performed by him.

But great and overwhelming as this testimony might be to the minds of those who had seen and heard our Saviour during his ministry, the doctrine of the apostles came home to the understanding and conscience of the more simple minded Jews with a ten-fold conviction of its truth, when they became convinced that all the extraordinary and anomalous circumstances connected with the history of Jesus of Nazareth, such as his humble condition in life,

ignominious death, and final resurrection from the dead, had all been predicted of the Messiah by the ancient Jewish prophets. These facts any one could verify by an examination of the Old Testament Scriptures, and duly estimating the peculiar expressions there made concerning him. Thus for instance, in their discourse to the people, the apostles quoted *Psalm* xvi. where David had said, "my flesh shall rest in hope, because thou wilt not leave my soul in the grave, (or hades,) neither (*i. e* because) *thou wilt not suffer thy Holy One*, (the Messiah,) *to see corruption.*" Now the inference from this passage is direct that the Messiah should be at some time in the state of the dead, and as such liable to corruption, for corruption could only be predicated of one that was dead. If he lived always, he could not be liable to corruption. Since David had spoken this under the influences of the spirit of Jehovah, the death of Jesus of Nazareth therefore, was not only no objection to the fact of his being the Messiah, but was literally what had been predicted of that illustrious personage.

Though we are not informed how much further they appealed to the ancient prophets as establishing this doctrine, we must presume they also insisted upon *Isaiah* liii; *Daniel* ix. 26; and other passages that are now familiarly referred to as establishing the fact, that the ancient Jewish prophets did announce the Messiah should suffer a violent or ignominious death for the salvation of mankind. Of these prophecies it will be sufficient to quote the substance of *Isaiah* liii. where it is stated in terms not to be mistaken, that the Messiah should be "*wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. For the transgression of the people he was stricken. His grieve should be with the wicked, and with the rich in his death. Jehovah shall make his soul an offering for sin. By his knowledge he should justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities.*" Therefore, said Jehovah, will I divide with him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, *because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.*"*

If we therefore reflect upon the intellectual condition of the Jewish people at this time, and that there were then actually present several hundred persons who directly testified to the resurrec-

* For a very full exhibition of prophecies fulfilled in the life, sufferings and death of Jesus Christ, see Dr. Samuel Clarke, *On the Being and Attributes of God*, 317—319.

tion of Jesus from the tomb on their personal knowledge, and that the circumstances of his humble condition and ignominious death had been foretold for centuries previously by the ancient Jewish prophets, there is no difficulty whatever in comprehending that the extensive conversions made by the apostles on and after the day of Pentecost, were effected upon very intelligible principles, and especially so as their preaching was accompanied with the miraculous endowment of being able to communicate their expositions to the vast body of Jews then assembled at Jerusalem, in those various languages which were familiarly spoken by them in the different countries in which they were resident.

The apostles in establishing the fact that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, necessarily destroyed the whole Jewish theory as to the functions to be exercised by that illustrious individual. They not only insisted he was Messiah, the Prince to whom Jehovah had given dominion over the kingdoms of the earth, but that his more immediate position towards mankind was that of a Saviour to redeem them from sin, for in virtue of what had been accomplished by him in his humiliation and death, Jehovah had promised to forgive and accept all those who would seek their salvation through him. Hence when the converts to the doctrine that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, applied to the apostles for instruction as to what they must do in order to obtain this salvation, (*Acts ii. 37,*) Peter simply replied, “repent,” (*i. e.* forsake every thing vicious in your lives and live righteously,) “and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, (as the Messiah) for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the holy spirit. For the promise, (*i. e.* of remission of sin and influence of the spirit) is to you and your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call,” (*i. e.* to all to whom the gospel should be preached.)

Although the substance of what the apostles taught concerning the official character of Jesus Christ, and the work to be further accomplished by him, is distinctly exhibited in the *Acts of the Apostles*, yet in that book as being essentially a mere historical statement, only the substance of their preaching is given. To understand the subject more distinctly we must look at the different epistles written by the apostles, and from the expositions there made by them, we can fully understand what they taught concerning Jesus in his official position towards mankind. But before we proceed to make a direct exposition of what the apostles taught on this subject, we must remark, that notwithstanding the vast impor-

tance of the doctrines involved in the theory of the Messiah's official functions, the great dignity of his character, and the remarkable circumstances under which he was first promised to mankind after the transgression of Adam and Eve, yet the apostles have no where given us any theological exposition concerning him personally, nor any rationale of the purposes accomplished through him. The teaching of the apostles on these subjects is altogether dogmatical, founded exclusively upon the predictions made by the Old Testament prophets as announcing the dignity and functions of the Messiah. Having stated these things to their converts, the apostles then applied to Jesus of Nazareth whatever the prophets had announced concerning the Messiah. They communicated no new information whatever that would throw any light upon the subject as involved in the scheme or purposes of Jehovah. They only taught that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah as predicted by Old Testament prophets, but they taught nothing abstractedly concerning the Messiah himself.

As the apostles therefore have given us no systematic exposition on these subjects, we shall not undertake to make any exhibition concerning Jesus Christ as the Messiah, further than in the mere arrangement of the dogmas communicated to us respecting him as set forth in the New Testament. Of these as some doctrines apparently precede others in their inferential bearing, we shall speak of them in such an order, at the same time we disclaim any systematic views on the subject, other than as inferences directly deducible from each particular dogma, as we are able to collect authorities from different portions of the New Testament, but without pretending to give them any coherence as a system.

As the propitiatory death of Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, constituted the basis upon which the apostles preached salvation to mankind, I shall in the first instance, place that doctrine before the reader as being most distinctly intimated to us in the following passages of the New Testament, let the explanation of the fact be what it may.

Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation (a mercy seat) through faith *in his blood*.—*Romans* iii. 25.

Who was delivered (*i. e.* to death) *for our offences, &c.*—*Romans* iv. 25.

Christ died for the ungodly, &c. Christ died for us, being now justified by his *blood, reconciled to God by the death of his Son*.—*Romans* v. 6, 8, 9, 10.

He that spared not his own son, but *delivered him up* (i. e. to death) for us all, &c.—*Romans* viii. 32.

Destroy him not with thy meat, for whom Christ *died*.—*Rom. xiv. 15.*

If one (i. e. Christ) *died* for all, &c. we should henceforth live unto him which *died* for them. God hath *reconciled* us to himself by Jesus Christ; hath made him *to be sin*, (i. e. a sin offering) for us. *2 Cor. v. 14, 15, 18, 21.*

Who gave himself *for our sins*.—*Gal. i. 4.*

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made *a curse for us*.—*Gal. iii. 13.*

God sent forth his Son, &c. to *redeem* them that were under the law.—*Gal. iv. 4, 5.*

In whom (i. e. Christ) we have *redemption through his blood*, the *forgiveness of sins*, &c.—*Eph. i. 7.*

Ye who were far off, are made nigh by the *blood* of Christ.—*Eph. ii. 13.*

Christ hath given himself for us an *offering and a sacrifice* to God.—*Eph v. 2.*

In whom we have *redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins*.—*Colos. i. 14.*

To obtain *salvation* by our Lord Jesus Christ who *died for us*.—*1 Thess. v. 9, 10.*

Who gave himself *a ransom* for all.—*1 Tim. ii. 6.*

Who *gave himself for us*, that he might *redeem* us from all iniquity.—*Titus ii. 14.*

When he had by himself *purged our sins*.—*Heb. i. 3.*

That he by the grace of God should *taste death* for every man. *Heb. ii. 9.*

Who needeth not daily *to offer up sacrifice*, &c. for this he did once when he *offered up himself*.—*Heb. vii. 27.*

By his own *blood* he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained *eternal redemption* for us. How much more shall the blood of Christ who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God; to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. So Christ was once offered (i. e. in sacrifice) to bear the sins of many, (rather *oi polloi* the many,) i. e. all mankind who would receive him.—*Heb. ix. 12—14, 26, 28.*

Through the *offering of the body* of Jesus Christ once for all. After he had offered one *sacrifice for sins*; for *by one offering* he hath perfected *for ever* them that are sanctified. Having therefore

boldness to enter into the holiest by the *blood* of Jesus.—*Heb.* x. 10, 12, 14, 19.

That he might sanctify the people with his own *blood*.—*Heb.* xiii. 12.

Elect, &c. unto obedience, and sprinkling of the *blood* of Jesus Christ. Redeemed with the precious *blood* of Christ as of a lamb without blemish.—*1 Peter* i. 2, 19.

Who his own self bare *our sins* in his own body on the tree (*i. e.* cross.)—*1 Peter* ii. 24.

Christ hath once suffered *for sins*, the just for the unjust, *that he might bring us to God*.—*1 Peter* iii. 18.

The *blood* of Jesus Christ his Son, *cleanseth us from all sins*.—*1 John* i. 7.

He is the *propitiation for our sins*, &c. and the *sins* of the whole world.—*1 John* ii. 2.

He was manifested *to take away our sins*.—*1 John* iii. 5.

God sent his Son to be the *propitiation for our sins*.—*1 John* iv. 10.

Him that loved us, *and washed us from our sins in his own blood*. *Revelations* i. 5.

Another essential doctrine of the New Testament is, that Jesus Christ in virtue of his sacrificial death became a high priest before Jehovah in behalf of mankind so absolutely, that there is no access to the Creator but through the intervention of his mystical functions. This priestly character of the Messiah was announced by David in *Psalm* cx. where Jehovah is represented as recognizing him to be a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek. Upon this prediction the author of the epistle to the Hebrews largely expatiates, and asserts that Jesus the Christ, as a *high priest before Jehovah*, instead of the ordinary sacrifices of bulls and goats as required under the Mosaic Dispensation, made an offering of himself. (*Hebrews* x. 10—11.) “We are sanctified through the *offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all*. For by *one offering* he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.” On this account it has been further urged, (*Hebrews* vii. 24, 25,) “Because he continueth ever, he hath *an unchangeable priesthood*: wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.” The same doctrine is insisted on in various passages of the epistles, as for instance:

Who *maketh intercession* for us.—*Romans* viii. 34.

He ever liveth to *make intercession* for us.—*Hebrews* vii. 27.

The *mediator* of a better covenant, (*i. e.* than that of Moses.) *Hebrews* viii. 6.

The *mediator* of the new covenant.—*Hebrews* ix. 12.

He entered into heaven (*i. e.* as a high priest) to appear in the presence of God for us.—*Hebrews* ix. 24.

There is one God, and one *mediator* between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.—*1 Tim.* ii. 5.

We have an *advocate* with the father, (*in*) Jesus Christ the righteous.*—*1 John* ii. 1.

Furthermore, in virtue of Christ's sacrificial death, and of his official dignity as high priest and mediator for mankind before Jehovah, it was announced to them by the apostles, that all who would receive him as thus exhibited in their preaching, should in consequence of their faith be *adopted* into the household or kingdom of God as his children, to whom spiritual influences and privileges would be given in virtue of that peculiar relation. On this most important doctrine, perhaps the most direct in its practical bearing of all other doctrines of Christianity, we shall not enlarge at this time, our present observations being only directed towards obtaining a comprehensive outline of the functions of Jesus in his exalted state as the Messiah.

The last office of the Messiah to which we call the attention of our readers, and concerning which we have been instructed very explicitly by the apostles, is that Jesus Christ has been constituted by Jehovah the judge of all men at the last day, by which commission he has the power to bestow eternal life upon all those whom he shall determine to be suitable subjects for the everlasting kingdom of heaven, or to condemn to everlasting death all those whom he shall determine to be unworthy.

A few references on this head are only necessary.

The Father hath committed all judgment to the Son.—*John* v. 22.

He (*i. e.* Jehovah) hath given him (Christ) authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man, (*i. e.* the Messiah; see *Daniel* vii. 13.)—*John* v. 27.

The apostles said, Jesus commanded us to preach unto the people and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the judge of the quick and dead.—*Acts* x. 42.

* For a very full view of the mediatorial office of Jesus Christ see Tillotson's three sermons on *1 Tim.* ii. 5, 6, numbered 71, 72, 73.

God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man (Jesus Christ) whom he hath ordained.
Acts xvii. 31.

We must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. *Rom. xiv. 10.*

The Lord Jesus shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom, (*i. e.* in the ultimate establishment of his kingdom.)—*2 Tim. iv. 1.*

The quotations I have now given from the New Testament respecting the office or functions of Jesus Christ, are so distinct in their expression, that I apprehend it to be impossible to give them any other signification than what is conveyed by the direct meaning of the words employed by the apostles. To interpret them in any other sense, would throw into utter confusion the general arguments which the apostles addressed to those who heard, or to those who may read what has been recorded in the New Testament writings. These plainly inform us, that Jesus Christ having died to accomplish the salvation of mankind, has ascended to heaven our high-priest, mediator and intercessor, so that all coming to Jehovah through him, shall receive pardon for their sins, an adoption into the household of God, spiritual illumination, assistance towards attaining perfection, and finally an inheritance in the future kingdom of heaven. Upon these particulars the testimony of evangelists and apostles is so expressly given, that there can be no reasonable doubt as to the import of their communications.

But plain and intelligible as the expositions of the New Testament are as to the office and functions of the Messiah, in their practical operation upon mankind under the Christian Dispensation, it is altogether otherwise than plain and intelligible, if we undertake to investigate who the Lord Jesus was in his inherent nature, and upon what theory or condition of things it was, by which he effected the salvation of mankind.

Though I am fully persuaded these subjects are altogether incomprehensible, and as such necessarily beyond the power of human nature to attain to any satisfactory conclusion respecting them, yet such is not the prevailing opinion of the great majority of professing christians. They have not only come to very definite conclusions on these subjects, but they hold them to be of essential importance towards attaining the salvation that is offered us through Jesus Christ.

It was to these speculations that I alluded in my prefatory observations at the commencement of the present investigation, when

I remarked that an exposition concerning the Lord Jesus Christ required discussion under two heads. *First*, as comprehending those plain and distinct annunciations given in the New Testament as to his history or the official functions exercised by him, which I observed were perfectly intelligible to us as regarded either the mere facts stated, or their practical operation. In *the second place*, I remarked that there were other matters connected with the history and functions of Jesus Christ as the Messiah, which were altogether incomprehensible, and therefore in making our exposition concerning him we should separate the intelligible from the incomprehensible. By such a proceeding I apprehended we would be able to discern what the Scripture required from our faith and obedience, as detached from what was incomprehensible, for as being such it was evidently impossible for us to form any rational opinions on the subject.

As I have already shewn what the apostles have communicated to us as matters addressed to our faith and obedience concerning Jesus of Nazareth as being the Messiah, I must now treat of certain particulars connected with his official position, that I regard as being altogether incomprehensible, notwithstanding the dogmatic teaching of theologians who have undertaken to expound them as matters of essential importance to the Christian faith.

These subjects which, contrary to the theologians, I consider to be altogether incomprehensible, are those that pertain in the first place to the inherent nature of Jesus Christ, and secondly as to the theory or mode by which he effected the salvation of mankind. Whatever theologians may have asserted, I contend that the apostles in preaching Jesus Christ have never in a single instance, given us any theological exposition concerning his inherent nature, nor any explanation of the principle through which he accomplished the salvation of mankind. They have simply asserted that he was the Messiah, that he had died for human sin, that there was no other salvation but through him.

In maintaining these doctrines the apostles advanced no other argument or proof, but that such was the doctrine which prophets inspired by Jehovah, had been commissioned by him to announce concerning the Messiah.

Thus at the day of Pentecost, (*Acts* ii. 14, &c.) Peter, after having accounted for the miraculous effusion of the holy spirit which had so powerfully excited the astonishment of the Jews, then turns to the people and reasoning with them exclusively as to what the prophets had announced concerning the Messiah, he then affirmed,

first, that all that had been predicted by the prophets concerning that personage, had been fulfilled by Jesus of Nazareth, and hence that he was the Messiah. *Secondly*, that Jehovah confirmed their statement by the miracles they performed in the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Having established these simple facts without one word of theology, either as to the inherent nature of Jesus, or as to the rationale of the salvation accomplished by him, Peter then calls on those who heard him to repent, and avail themselves of the salvation thus offered to them through Jesus of Nazareth as being the Messiah.

Peter employed a similar argument with the Jews at the beautiful gate of the temple, (*Acts* iii. 12—24.) See also Philip and the eunuch, (*Acts* viii. 27—35.) Peter and Cornelius, (*Acts* x. 34—43.) Paul's discourse to the people of Antioch in Pisidia, (*Acts* xiii. 14—47.) At Thessalonica and Berea, (*Acts* xvii. 1—3, 10, 11.) At Corinth, (*Acts* xviii. 4, 5, 6, 28.) Before Agrippa, (*Acts* xxvi. 22, 23.) At Rome, (*Acts* xxviii. 23—28.)

In all these discourses there is not a word said concerning the inherent nature of Jesus Christ, nor explanation given concerning the theory by which he became the Saviour of mankind. Neither have the apostles communicated any information on these subjects in any of the epistles preserved in the New Testament. This fact is also strongly exhibited to us by Paul in his first epistle to the Corinthians, i. 17, where he says that Christ sent him to preach the gospel, “*not with wisdom of words* ;” (*i. e.* not by learned or theological expositions,) “lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect: For the preaching of the cross” (*i. e.* salvation through a crucified Redeemer) “is to them that perish foolishness,” (*i. e.* mere nonsense) “but unto us which are saved, it is,” (founded on) “the power of God,” (the Creator and sustainer of all things.)

The apostle goes on to remark that the Jews require signs and miracles (from heaven) as proofs of the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth, and the Greeks require to be convinced by intellectual and philosophical argumentation that the Creator of the universe has appointed any such condition of things. But says he, “we preach Christ crucified,” (*i. e.* a Saviour although crucified,) a doctrine which in consequence of the theory maintained among the Jews concerning the Messiah, is to them an absolute stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness, (*i. e.* nonsense, as proposing a Redeemer to them who could not save himself from an ignominious death.) But whatever the unbelieving Jews or ignorant Greeks may think of this doctrine, yet to us, says the apostle, who

are called, (*i. e.* who have accepted the call,) whether Jews or Gentiles, this doctrine of salvation through a crucified Messiah, is based upon the infinite wisdom and omnipotence of Jehovah as has been plainly inculcated in the prophetical writings.

Hence says Paul in the next chapter, (*1 Cor. ii. 1, &c.*) when I came to you preaching the gospel, I came not with excellency of speech or wisdom, (*i. e.* with no theological disquisitions on the subject,) but I determined to preach nothing among you but that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah although he was crucified, and this doctrine I maintained among you, not in the seductive influences of eloquent and argumentative discourses, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power, "that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of man" (*i. e.* on ingenious theological expositions) "but in the power of God;" (*i. e.* on the power of Jehovah to accomplish whatever he had promised through the prophets to those who will rely upon his word.)

Whether the apostles themselves possessed any knowledge concerning the inherent nature of Jesus Christ, or of the theory by which the salvation of mankind was accomplished, I altogether doubt, for why should they forbear to communicate it when their great business was to convince and convert the world? Or if they were forbidden to announce it, what must we think of the presumption of theologians who have undertaken to expound these subjects as being matters essential to the Christian faith. However, whether the apostles had this knowledge or not, they have made no communication to mankind on these particulars, and in preaching the gospel whether to the Jews or to the heathen,* they never offered any other consideration to them than that the Old Testament prophets had announced a variety of predictions concerning the Messiah, which had all been fulfilled in the life, doctrine, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. Any other argument used by them was in appealing to the miracles and other supernatural evidences that they were enabled to perform by an invocation to Jehovah in the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

But notwithstanding the New Testament writers have given us no instruction whether as concerns the inherent nature of the Lord Jesus Christ, nor of the theory by which he accomplished the sal-

* If I had sufficient space to justify a more extensive discussion of this subject, I would like to exhibit this matter more distinctly by an analysis of Paul's discourse to the Athenians. (*Acts xvii. 16, &c.*) But as the size of my work seems to require contraction rather than expansion, I shall say nothing on the subject unless the printer may hereafter require some additional matter to render the volumes of equal bulk.

vation of mankind, theologians have undertaken to expound these matters with all formality, and have so far prevailed in enforcing them, that the great mass of christians actually believe that an unhesitating assent to these theological expositions, are matters in which their salvation is most deeply involved. The extensive prevalence of such belief, therefore, seems to require that in addition to what we have already shewn that the apostles inculcated nothing on such subjects, that we should furthermore exhibit the amount of anomalies and inconsistencies of prevailing theological speculations, so that in discerning their irreconcilability with the Scriptures, we may the more willingly regard them as being entirely presumptuous.

That the reader may with as little prejudice as possible enter upon this investigation, I call his attention to Christ's own words. "**NO ONE KNOWETH WHO THE SON IS BUT THE FATHER,**" a remark made by him, *Luke* x. 22, and which I interpret in the most absolute manner. To this rigid conclusion I have been led by a very full examination of the different controversies among theologians on the subject, in which I find nothing but contradictions and utterly inexplicable anomalies. But as some of my readers probably have never thoroughly studied the subject, they may not be prepared to adopt my conclusion as to its utter incomprehensibility. To convince them therefore of this fact, it may be necessary that I should establish the correctness of my deduction by shewing them the entire insufficiency of any prevailing theological exposition.

That there are any passages in the New Testament writings that formally or explicitly instruct us as to the inherent nature of Jesus Christ, or as concerns the theory upon which the salvation of mankind was accomplished by him, no theologian can pretend to assert, be his opinions on these subjects what they may. But notwithstanding this remarkable omission which could only have proceeded from the determination of God not to make mankind any revelation on those particulars, theologians have undertaken to penetrate into his councils, and through inferences deduced from various passages of Scripture, they have made conclusions which they have urged with the utmost dogmatism upon the christian world, as being matters of belief essential to their salvation.

Of how little value these inferences of theologians are, is however strongly exhibited to us in the utterly opposite conclusions to which they have arrived. Thus with respect to the inherent nature of the Lord Jesus Christ, there are three different opinions.

1st. That of the Trinitarians, who assert he was co-essential, co-eternal, co-equal with Jehovah, and that together with the Holy Spirit, they constitute a Trinity which, though of three persons, are but one God.

2d. The Arians affirm that Jesus Christ is the highest of all created spirits or intelligences, but inferior to Jehovah as a son is to his father. They deny the personality of the Holy Spirit, and consequently reject the doctrine of the Tri-unity.

3d. The Humanitarians or Socinians, consider Jesus Christ to have been a mere man, the son of Joseph and Mary.

It signifies nothing that the large majority of intellectual, learned, and devout christians, have adopted the Trinitarian hypothesis. I fully admit the fact, but truth does not depend upon majorities, and if we look at the individuals who have rejected the doctrine of the Trinity, we shall find among them some of the brightest names in the history of the world, whether we estimate them by their genius, learning, or piety. It is scarcely necessary to mention Locke, Sir Isaac Newton, Milton, Dr. Samuel Clarke, Lardner, Priestley, &c.

One would suppose that the radical differences that thus exist among the intellectual, the learned, and the devout, concerning this subject, would have opened the eyes of mankind as to its incomprehensibility. On the contrary however, the fact of an opposition to the prevailing theological assumption has merely excited the indignation of the majority, and induced them to regard such persons as the enemies of God, whom it was justifiable to treat with reproaches, persecutions, and in darker ages to put them to death. That the Anti-Trinitarians have not acted in a similar manner, is especially referrible to their want of power; for in the fourth century when the Arian controversy was at its height, they persecuted the Trinitarians whenever they had the opportunity.

But though the christian world has not yet learned to appreciate the fact, that the inherent nature of Jesus Christ, and the principle by which the salvation of mankind was effected through him, are utterly incomprehensible matters, as not having been revealed to us in the Scriptures, yet surely it is to be hoped they will not continue in their misapprehension of these subjects if they be fairly exhibited to them. Encouraged by this hope, as well as to bear my humble testimony on the subject, I will attempt to bring it to the full comprehension of my readers, by shewing the utter irreconcileabilities and anomalies that are involved in every human speculation on these doctrines, whether according to the theories of the Trinitarians, Arians, or Socinians.

Theologians, at least those of modern times, seem to have investigated the question of the inherent nature of Jesus Christ upon a kind of syllogistic basis. They have inferred in the first place, that he must be either God, or less than God, or a mere man; for they cannot imagine of any other conditions of being. Having laid down this basis, they have then examined the Scriptures and having classified the several texts bearing on the subject, they have then come to a conclusion from them, that the doctrine and teaching of the Scriptures implies either that he was God, or less than God, or a mere man, according to the alternatives offered in the premise assumed.

After having adopted one or the other conclusion as being the most plausible, they have then either disregarded other texts anomalous to, or opposing their inference, or they explain them away so as to suit their opinion, and then arraying together whatever sustains their belief they publish them to the world, embodying such an apparent array of texts and arguments in their favor, that those whose opinions are either made up or inclined towards any particular one of the three hypothesis, consider these summaries to be altogether unanswerable. Instead of being any demonstration of the subject, such expositions are merely compends of what may be advanced in favor of any particular opinion.

Whatever notion therefore men may have on the subject, and whatever amount of Scripture texts they may adduce in favor of their several opinions, their belief is merely inferential, from the undeniable fact that the New Testament writers have not made any explicit statement on the subject. As the opinion therefore, be it which of the three it may, is only an inference, we can only test the strength of such inference by other inferential reasoning that bears upon the subject. If as an inference it is considered that the Scripture teaches any particular doctrine, the inference if it be good must explain every apparent anomaly or inconsistency involved in such inference. If it cannot explain it, then the inference is not good, as not explaining what is anomalous or contradictory.

Men ought not to allow themselves to be deceived with any fallacy in this case as implying that the anomalies or inconsistencies of theological inferences are to be protected by the incomprehensibility of the subject itself. That a subject may be incomprehensible to mankind is very possible, and if it is so, then it should be left in its incomprehensibility. But surely no one can be illogical enough to allow a person to give an inferential construction to an incomprehensible subject, and then when requested to explain any anomaly or inconsistency involved in such inference, to plead that as the

subject belongs to the incomprehensible nature or purposes of the Almighty, it is presumptuous for men to undertake to scrutinize such matters farther than he has been pleased to reveal himself. This they assume to be precisely to the extent of their peculiar inference, and thus the infinite and incomprehensible nature of the Almighty is used merely as a shield to protect any presumptuous exposition which theology sees fit to put upon the unrevealed purposes of the Creator of the Universe.*

To obtain a full comprehension of the entirely unsatisfactory character of any theological exposition concerning the inherent nature of our Redeemer, or the theory upon which human salvation was effected by him, it will be necessary to scrutinize each of these particulars separately, and *first*, as regards his inherent nature.

In estimating what theologians have inferred from the Scriptures concerning the inherent nature of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall find that every speculation they have constructed on the subject involves such an amount of unreasonable perplexities and anomalies, that no unprejudiced man can regard them in any other point of view than as so many distinct proofs of the absolute incomprehensibility of the subject itself.

On the one hand we find certain expressions of the apostles concerning the character and nature of Jesus Christ, which in the estimation of the Trinitarians indicate his co-equality with Jehovah; and even if we abate the intensity of such expressions so as to accommodate them to the Arian hypothesis, they would still imply that Jesus Christ in his inherent nature, was only inferior to Jehovah, as being the first and greatest of all created intelligences. Without quoting such passages extensively, it will be sufficient to mention the remarkable texts of *Philip.* ii. 5—7; *Colos.* i. 15—17. From these passages it would seem almost impossible that we could regard Jesus Christ in any other light than as exhibited by either the Trinitarians or the Arians, and yet in connection with these texts we have the doctrine expressly laid down by the apostle (*Philip.* ii. 9—11) that in consequence of the great humiliation of Jesus Christ, that God has *exalted him, and giren him a*

* Such reasoning as this constitutes a fallacy which is not distinctly laid down in our treatises on logic. It is indeed in a certain degree "*a begging of the question*," but it is more especially that subtle sophism which the lawyers term "*a negative pregnant with an affirmative*," *i. e.* while it asserts a denial, it at the same time makes an affirmation. An incautious reasoner entrapped by this sophism, will find it extremely difficult to extricate himself. It is of such frequent use in the defence of theological speculations that I have thought it advisable to warn the reader on the subject.

name which is above every other name, &c. If the doctrine of Christ's inherent nature whether as stated by the Trinitarians or the Arians be correct, how is it possible that he could be exalted as the reward of his humiliation and obedience. According to the Arians he was already only inferior to Jehovah, according to the Trinitarians he was already co-equal with him. The proposed explanation that this exaltation of Christ was in his human capacity is preposterous,* for as his humiliation consisted in his abasing himself *in his inherent nature*, the reward or exaltation could only be as superadded to *that inherent nature*. Theologians may undertake to defend such an interpretation, but no unprejudiced man I should presume, is able to comprehend its application. The proposed solution is a mere assumption suggested by theologians to solve a perplexity in their theological system for which the Scripture gives no justification.

The doctrine of the Socinians on the inherent nature of Jesus Christ is equally irreconcilable with the statements made in Scripture. It is wholly impossible to explain *Philip.* ii. 5—7, or *Colos.* i. 15, &c. with the theory that Jesus Christ was a mere man.† The circumstances of his supernatural birth from a virgin, the plain intimations of his pre-existence, &c. are amply sufficient to confute

* Of all the proposed solutions respecting the Trinitarian hypothesis, I consider this to be the most unreasonable. Not only does the idea of one person of the Trinity rewarding the other, virtually destroy the theological unity of the Godhead, but it is evidently impossible after such subdivision, that one could reward the other without lessening his own authority, power, or glory. The only standard of comparison or illustration that can be applied to the subject, as far as I can perceive, is the condition of the two kings of Lacedæmon, or the two consuls of the Romans. But as both of these dualities already enjoyed supreme and equal powers, in what manner could one reward the other but by abasing himself. The Trinitarians however fall back on the incomprehensibility of the Godhead, and thus with the fallacy already mentioned, of using "a negative pregnant with an affirmative," they cover their assumption on the subject by a reference to the incomprehensibility of God, whereas that very incomprehensibility condemns their presumption in undertaking to expound the subject. If God is to be regarded as being incomprehensible, *every speculation on the subject* is alike presumptuous and unjustifiable.

† Hence says Robert Hall, (*Works* iii. 497,) after quoting *Philippians* ii. 6—11, "here we see Christ is set forth as the greatest example of condescension, in that though he bore the form of God, yet he took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. These particulars could not have evinced any humility in our Saviour on the supposition of his having no previous existence, nor a nature higher than human. No person (man) was ever praised for humility in respect that he was found in fashion as a man, or appeared as the servant of the Most High; these are the necessary appendages of his condition and existence quite foreign from his will, and cannot for a moment enter into the consideration of that part of his moral character which respects lowliness of mind."

the Socinian hypothesis, which indeed has scarcely any argument in its favor, but as an alternative to the Trinitarian or Arian schemes, perplexed as they are by irreconcilable anomalies or contradictions. The Socinians seem to have inferred that as the Trinitarian or Arian schemes are irreconcilable either to Scripture or reason, that in such defect the Socinian hypothesis must be true from the apparent impossibility of suggesting any other scheme on the subject. Such an inference however, as applied to the infinite Creator of all things, is wholly unjustifiable; for as the scheme of purposes in the mission of Jesus Christ emanate from an infinitely wise, omnipotent, and perfect being, it is utterly absurd for mankind to assume any limitation as to the possibilities of Jehovah's mode of action, on the ground that we can only imagine three modes by which a purpose may be effected. That none of the modes suggested are comprehensible in themselves as to their rationale, nor reconcilable with Scripture, I apprehend is very clear, but as Jehovah has not made any revelation to mankind on the subject, it is altogether unreasonable as well as presumptuous for any one to urge that the conjectures of any individual or sect ought to be received as being the truth, because all other conflicting suppositions may be shewn to be untrue.

In short, the proceeding of the christian world respecting the inherent nature of the Redeemer, has been like that of the Jews concerning the kingdom to be established by him. The prophets had announced that the Messiah should be a great Prince, the saviour or deliverer of the Jewish people, and that all nations should be subdued before him. Though there were other predictions concerning him that foretold his humiliation, and death, the calling of the Gentiles, and his rejection by the Jews; yet the Jewish rabbis could not reconcile these various anomalies. Instead therefore of leaving the subject as involved with some inexplicably unknown condition of things which time could only unravel, the rabbis rejected every prediction anomalous to their assumption, and determined that he would be a great temporal prince, who after having delivered them from political subjection to any heathen power, should then rule over them and the nations of the earth, in all the splendor of an eastern king.

THE INHERENT NATURE AND CHARACTER OF JESUS CHRIST IS AS FULLY INVOLVED IN INCOMPREHENSIBLE ANOMALIES AND PERPLEXITIES TO THE CHRISTIAN WORLD, AS THE MESSIAH'S CHARACTER WAS TO THE JEWS BEFORE THE ADVENT; and the clearest demonstration of this incomprehensibility, is the existence of the

three different and irreconcileable theories of the Trinitarians, Arians, and Socinians. Each of these hypotheses has been constructed by rejecting every passage of Scripture anomalous to each theory, and yet mankind are so blind in their prejudices as to insist upon their peculiar doctrines on the subject with the utmost bigotry and tenacity.

I fall back therefore upon our Saviour's own declaration concerning himself: (*Luke x. 22.*) NO MAN KNOWETH WHO THE SON IS BUT THE FATHER.* That no revelation to mankind has ever been made since that time, must be evident from the three utterly irreconcileable theories that men have adopted on the subject. As respects the office, function and authority of Jesus as the Messiah, the Scripture is perfectly clear; nor would there be any difference of opinion among devout men on that subject, if they had not arbitrarily interpreted the positive statements of the Scripture in such a manner as to force them into accordance with their presumptuous speculations concerning his inherent nature.

As a further justification of the view I have taken of this subject, I call the reader's attention to the circumstance that the Redeemer is no where designated in the Scriptures by any other name than the one he bore whilst he lived upon earth, *viz.* JESUS OF NAZARETH. Any other appellations by which he is mentioned in the Scripture, are either official terms, such as Messiah or Christ,

* The greater number of the more common expositors of the New Testament, in my apprehension, have most culpably passed over these remarkable words without any comment upon them. Neither Dr. Adam Clarke in his Commentary; Bloomfield in his Digest; Campbell on the Four Gospels; Dr. Samuel Clarke in his Paraphrase; nor Lightfoot in his Exercitations; have taken the least notice of the passage, a faithlessness in duty towards their readers which I cannot see how it can be regarded otherwise than *criminal*.

Scott, alone of the more ordinary commentators whom I have examined, quotes Whitby's remarks in a partial manner as to the interpretation of the text, but makes no practical deduction from it; his reference however enabled me to examine Whitby's Commentary, which I subjoin as being a true exhibition of this remarkable text as to its peculiar signification.

Whitby's version is, "no man" (Greek, *none*,) "knoweth who the Son is," (*as to his nature and dignity*) "but the Father; and" (*no man knoweth truly*) "who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal" (*the saving knowledge of*) "him."

On this version Whitby remarks in his note, that our Saviour's observation does not "respect what he was to do or suffer; but *his nature, excellence and dignity*; as the words following, 'who the Father is,' respect his" (*i. e.* the father's) "nature, his divine excellence and dignity;"—but instead of stopping here as he ought to have done, Whitby unjustifiably adds, "as exhibited to us in the person of Jesus Christ."

(the Anointed one) or by epithets derived from the functions exercised by him, or from purposes accomplished by him, such as High Priest, Mediator, Saviour or Redeemer.

The only term used in the Scripture that we do not understand as to the absolute sense in which it is to be comprehended, is the expression "*Son of God*" What was actually signified by this phraseology when originally bestowed, (*Psalm ii. 7.*) it is impossible to conjecture as the term is not there defined or explained. In all other places of Scripture it is evidently used as a mere synonyme with that of Messiah or Christ. Paul however understood it as being only applicable to him *after his resurrection*. See *Acts xiii. 33.*

The inference from these facts I apprehend is very important, Jehovah as not communicating to mankind any other name than the one by which Jesus of Nazareth was known whilst upon earth, seems evidently to instruct us that he was not to be known among men during the Christian Dispensation by any other name; be his inherent nature what it may. As Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, as such he accomplished whatever belonged to that mysterious office. Through him, as set forth in the Scripture, mankind are alone to expect salvation. This inference does not affect the fact of his inherent nature, be that what it may, but it surely directs us as to the point of view in which mankind are at present to regard the Messiah, *i. e. in his official position only*, and not according to his inherent nature, for on this subject we have no instruction given in the Scripture.

The peculiar and important phraseology of the New Testament in this particular is overlooked by ordinary readers, through the improper rendering of our Saviour's name and title in our English translation. This is owing to the influence of the Latin language upon modern civilization, for as there are no *articles* in that language, so the first translators by a servile following of the Vulgate, have blended our Saviour's name and office together as if they were his christian name and surname. It ought to have been printed JESUS *the CHRIST*, or what would be still better, JESUS *the MESSIAH*; for the word *Christ* is merely the Greek translation of the Hebrew term *Messiah*.

Yet with this explanation there is still an ellipsis; *Jesus* is the Greek translation of the Hebrew name *JOSHUA*, which was a common appellation among the Jews, and hence to distinguish our Lord he was designated as *JOSHUA (or Jesus) of Nazareth*. Hence when prayer is offered to Jehovah through him, it is virtually when

the ellipsis is supplied, in the name, or for the sake, of *Jesus of Nazareth, who is the Messiah.*

The direct inference from this universal mode of speaking of our Saviour by his apostles and evangelists, is direct and important, for it recognizes him simply in his official position as the Messiah, and consequently implies any practice to be unjustifiable that attaches any theological dogma to his name as involving subtleties concerning his inherent nature.

Having now sufficiently exhibited the absolute incomprehensibility of the inherent nature, or personality of Jesus Christ, notwithstanding the assumptions of theologians on the subject, I shall now undertake to shew that the theory or scheme of Jehovah, through which human salvation was effected by the Messiah, is equally as incomprehensible as his inherent nature.

From what we have exhibited in our previous discourse, (pages 36—40,) it is abundantly clear from the New Testament writers, that Jesus Christ died for our sins, that he is our high priest, mediator, and advocate before God, and that he shall at the last day as our judge, determine our future and eternal condition, whether by accepting the righteous or rejecting the unrighteous.

That Jesus Christ did not come into the world to remedy the scheme of Jehovah as having been thwarted or defeated through the infirmity of Adam, or malice of Satan, we have clearly shewn in our discourse of that subject, Vol. I. 360, it being utterly incredible that the omnipotent prescient Jehovah, could be either thwarted or defeated in any contemplated purpose. If any one can be supposed absurd enough to believe such a thing possible, it will inevitably follow that Jehovah is neither omnipotent nor prescient, conclusions entirely abhorrent to any exposition of the divine attributes as either taught or implied in the Scriptures.

Jesus Christ therefore came into the world to accomplish human salvation upon some unknown principle involved in the unrevealed counsels of Jehovah. He died consequently according to the pre-determined purpose of Jehovah to that end, and we can only obtain salvation by coming to him through Jesus Christ as the redeemer, mediator, or advocate, thus announced to us on the part of Jehovah.*

* The view that I have taken concerning the incomprehensibility of Christ's sacrificial death, and the practical manner in which we should regard it, is distinctly advocated by the profound Bishop Butler, in his *Analogy*, &c. part ii. chap. 5. He there remarks: "How and in what manner it" (the death of Christ) "had this efficacy, there are not wanting persons who have endeavoured to explain; but I

Yet distinctly as this doctrine is taught in the Scriptures, it is utterly unintelligible to us as to its theory, or mode of operation. For how could any being, however exalted he may be, atone for the sins of other individuals? How could the righteousness of any individual being, however exalted, compensate for the unrighteousness of other individuals? How could the humiliation, suffering and death even of the most exalted being, deliver other beings from the penalties annexed to their personal transgression and disobedience?

But though we are unable to comprehend this subject, yet our ignorance is not to be assumed as any objection to the truth of the doctrine, for as Archbishop Tillotson has well observed on the subject, (*Sermon on Heb. ix. 26,*) in reply to the Socinians, “they who make so great a noise with this objection, (*i. e.* the propitiatory death of Jesus Christ,) do seem to me to give a full and clear answer to it themselves, by acknowledging as they constantly and expressly do, *that our Saviour suffered all this for our benefit and advantage, though not in our place and stead.* For this, to my apprehension, is plainly to give up the cause, unless they can shew a good reason why there is not as much injustice and cruelty in an innocent person’s suffering *for the benefit and advantage of a malefactor*, as in his suffering in his stead, &c. For if Christ died for our benefit, so as some way or other by virtue of his death and sufferings to save us from the wrath of God, and procure our escape from eternal death, *this, for aught I know, is all that any body means by his dying in our stead.*”

We have thus brought our exposition concerning the Messiah whether as respects the work accomplished by him in the world, the functions exercised by him since his exaltation to heaven, and

do not find that the Scripture has explained it. And if the Scripture has, as it surely has, left this matter of the satisfaction of Christ mysterious, all conjectures about it must be, if not evidently absurd, yet at least uncertain.

“Some have endeavored to explain the efficacy of what Christ has done and suffered for us beyond what the Scripture has authorized; others, probably, because they could not explain it, have been for taking it away, and confining his office as Redeemer of the world to his instruction, example, and government of the church. Whereas the doctrine of the gospel appears to be, not only that he taught the efficacy of repentance, but rendered it of the efficacy of which it is, by what he did and suffered for us; that he obtained for us the benefit of having our repentance accepted unto eternal life: not only that he revealed to sinners that they were in a capacity of salvation, and how they might obtain it, but moreover, that he put them into this capacity of salvation. By what he did and suffered for them, he put us into a capacity of escaping future punishment and obtaining future happiness. And it is our wisdom thankfully to accept the benefit by performing the conditions upon which it is offered, without disputing how it was procured,” &c.

the question concerning his inherent nature, all under the same category, *to wit*, that the whole subject is inscrutable and admits of no human solution.

But ought this condition of things to have any effect upon our religious faith? Not in the smallest degree; for we receive every doctrine concerning the Messiah, as being announced by prophets or apostles who were commissioned from Jehovah to make such communications to mankind. These doctrines are therefore particulars addressed to our faith or intellectual confidence in the word of God, of whose truth we cannot doubt; for we have in our preceding pages fully established the fact that the Scriptures are a true record of revelations that Jehovah has condescended to make to mankind. Let us look, however, at the whole subject under the light of a practical illustration. Suppose an European monarch should send an ambassador to the United States of America for the purpose of making a treaty. Would any rational man perplex himself to ascertain whether this ambassador was a prince or a commoner, a general, admiral, or of any other class of persons. Our only concern would be to ascertain whether he had the proper credentials by which we could negotiate with him, and if we be satisfied in this particular, we receive him in the spirit with which he was sent, we make a treaty, and we henceforth enjoy all the accruing benefits. It is a matter wholly indifferent to us what may have been the political or social character of the ambassador in his own country.

In like manner we should regard the mission of Jesus Christ to mankind. He came to fulfil a certain purpose in the unrevealed wisdom of Almighty God, but which has been announced to us in the Scriptures, as being essential to our salvation. Is this fact true or not? And if true, what is it that is required from mankind to entitle them to this great salvation? These are the only important matters for our consideration, all others as not being revealed to our faith, are altogether presumptuous.

To my apprehension, this view of our Saviour's character and function, is the very one recommended by Paul when he expressed himself in the following manner, *Rom. x. 6—9.*

But the righteousness (this word ought to be *justification*) which is of faith, speaketh on this wise, *Say not in thy heart who shall ascend unto heaven, that is to bring Christ down from above? Or, who shall descend into the deep, that is to bring up Christ again from the dead? But what sayeth it? the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that is the word of faith which we*

preach. That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

In other words, Paul observes, do not concern yourselves how Christ descended from heaven, nor how he again ascended to his glory; believe the fact that he did descend, and that he again ascended, with power sufficient to save as many as shall call upon him.

Though we could urge some other important considerations on this subject, yet as they more especially conflict with the determination made by the first council of Nice, we reserve them until we shall hereafter investigate the consequences that resulted from the action of that ecclesiastical assembly.

EXPOSITION OF THE PRINCIPLES OF THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION.

I HAVE now given a general view of Jehovah's progressive dealings with mankind from the origin of our race down to the promulgation of the Christian Dispensation, and have at the same time given a running commentary on the general subject, sufficiently explicit for comprehending the peculiar features of the several dispensations, under which mankind, as free agents left to themselves, were to determine their conduct. It now only remains for us to condense into one distinct view those particulars whether of faith or practice that are required under the Christian Dispensation, the consummation of Jehovah's hitherto progressive dealings with mankind, and under which economy we who live in the present age of the world are to fulfil the purpose for which we have been called into existence.

To properly appreciate this subject, I shall in the first place enumerate in a brief manner what I consider to be the fundamental principles of the Christian Dispensation, and afterwards will enlarge upon them, so as to exhibit their comprehensive nature when carried out to their full extent.

1st. The Creator of all things, who has revealed himself to us by the name of Jehovah, having in the inscrutability of his infinite councils made mankind intelligent and moral free agents of a certain capacity, in accordance with his own purposes has commissioned prophets or apostles to inform them, that those who shall attain through their own voluntary agencies to a certain intellectual and moral perfection, he will ultimately raise from the dead and place them in a state of immortal happiness; and that those who have not attained to the required degree of perfection, he will at the last day reject with a fearful condemnation.

The particulars of this perfection have been abundantly announced in the Old and New Testaments. They may be sum-

marily stated as requiring the utmost moral perfection, whether in thought, word, or deed, as the essential requisites for membership among that righteous and holy society of just persons, who are to constitute the inheritors of the kingdom of God. Men are therefore required to keep Jehovah's commandments with their whole heart, and mind, and strength, throughout the whole period of their intellectual life.

2d. But notwithstanding the absolute perfection of the obedience thus required from mankind, Jehovah nevertheless recognizes their inability to maintain this perfect obedience at all times and under all circumstances, by having constituted a Redeemer or Saviour for them in Jesus Christ. He, in the incomprehensible purposes of Jehovah, after having suffered an ignominious death, then arose from the dead, and ascended to heaven, where he evermore exists a mediator or high priest for mankind. Hence all persons coming to Jehovah through him, will have their past sins forgiven them for Jesus Christ's sake, provided they be truly penitent, and firmly resolved to live righteously before Jehovah in all things for the future.

3d. In addition to the mere fact that persons truly penitent are thus justified, or in other words have their sins forgiven them for Jesus Christ's sake, they are furthermore on that account, adopted as children into the family or household of Jehovah, and as such receive from him spiritual influences by which they not only discern their duties with greater distinctness, but they are thus assisted in doing what has been required of them as free agents, in accomplishing their perfection under the appointments of Jehovah.

4th. At the consummation of the period appointed for the probationary condition of mankind, we are informed in the New Testament there shall be a resurrection from the dead of all who have ever lived; when a judgment will be held upon every individual under the scrutiny of the Lord Jesus Christ, who has been appointed of Jehovah to superintend this universal investigation of human conduct. Then every one shall be judged according to his past life, and be either accepted of God as an inheritor of the everlasting kingdom of heaven, or else be rejected by him with an utter condemnation.

The doctrines I have thus laid down as the essentials of the christian faith, are taught us directly from the beginning to the end of the Scripture. They are not only formally communicated to us as being of divine authority, but they are the absolute scope and

substance of all the reasoning and argument with which prophets or apostles have either vindicated or illustrated the scheme of Jehovah with mankind.

These doctrines do not stand upon the technical signification of words or passages, but are simple communications, repeated it may be in a hundred different places of the Scripture, and are just as intelligible, I apprehend, to the mere English reader of the common translation, as they were to those individuals who received the annunciation of them personally from the mouths of prophets and apostles.

Whatever other persons may think of the exhibition I have thus made of the fundamental principles of Christianity, I feel satisfied that no individual is warranted to state them in terms less broad; and which I apprehend, must be approved of by the majority of christian sects, for I have alone insisted upon doctrines, that with the exception of the Socinians perhaps, all other christian societies will recognize as being essential to our salvation. That individual christians may have a more determinate view of the significance of these doctrines for themselves, is their indisputable right, but it is an exercise of intellectual responsibility that concerns individuals alone, as conscientious beings before their Creator, who will judge them as to any improper exercise of their faculties before him in these particulars. For we must never forget that we are *intellectual*, as well as *moral creatures*, undergoing trial before Jehovah, and that intellectual sin may be as clearly exhibited by our presumptuous doctrines, as it may be in our want of faith as to those particulars, that have been actually revealed to us.

In attempting to ascertain the foundations of our faith and practice as laid down in the Scripture, I have sufficiently shown in our remarks on the Scripture text, Vol. I. 256—279, that it is unjustifiable to build any doctrine upon technical meanings of mere words, or upon single and unsupported passages. We must alone ascertain our faith and practice from the evident scope and argument of the Scriptures, which though establishing certain principles, are more or less general in their expression, and scarcely if ever restricted by the limits of any positive definition. This omission of any technical precision on such subjects is in exact keeping with the theory of our intellectual probation, for it is required of us as being in such a condition, to exhibit an intellectual, conscientious, and willing obedience to the requirements of Jehovah, as free agents undergoing moral discipline before him. Hence there are certain matters announced in the Scriptures, which not to believe, would manifest

either a want of honesty, or that we cherished unjustifiable opinions which oppose the revelations of Jehovah. And again there are matters incidentally mentioned in the Scriptures, which for a man to frame into doctrines, argues presumption in attempting to pass those boundaries which our Creator has prescribed to human capacity. Every reflecting man must therefore be aware, that as intellectual beings of limited capacities, undergoing a probation before the Almighty Maker of all things on the ground of an honest application of our whole capacities to a special object, our condition is such that we are as likely to err in professing to believe too much, as we are in not believing what we ought.

It is therefore with great caution that I have announced what I consider to be the essential doctrines of Christianity, nor do I think it justifiable for any one not writing as a sectarian to state them less broadly. These general principles I think the Scripture clearly authorizes us to state, though I admit that men may differ very conscientiously as to the precise manner in which these general doctrines may be understood.

What I have thus laid before my readers as an exposition of the Christian Religion, actually contains every principle pertaining to our faith and practice as far as concerns any necessary comprehension of the general subject, and if men would only be satisfied to believe and do what Jehovah has thus required of them, nothing further need be said. But there has been so much theological speculation exercised in the investigation of the dogmas stated above, which are hallowed in the creeds of different christian sects, that I cannot but anticipate that objections will be made to the exposition I have given as being deficient in sundry important particulars. I therefore shall continue my work by a brief commentary upon that abstract of christian doctrines just made, which I shall not only maintain to be the very system of things advocated in the Scripture, but the reader will at the same time perceive how unjustifiable and presumptuous other men have been, who in the expositions they have undertaken to make of the Christian Religion have required other things from our faith than the Scriptures have laid down on the subject.

ON JEHOVAH'S REQUIREMENTS FROM MANKIND.

At page 56 I made the following statement, on which I now propose to enlarge, and shew its full bearing and significance.

"The Creator of all things, who has revealed himself to us by the name of Jehovah, having in the inscrutability of his infinite counsels made mankind intelligent and moral free agents of a certain capacity, in accordance with his own purposes has commissioned prophets or apostles to inform them, that those who shall attain through their own voluntary agencies to a certain intellectual and moral perfection,* he will ultimately raise from the dead and place them in a state of immortal happiness; and that those who have not attained to the required degree of perfection, he will at the last day reject with a fearful condemnation.

"The particulars of this perfection have been abundantly announced in the Old and New Testaments. They may be summarily stated as requiring the utmost moral perfection, whether in thought, word, or deed, as the essential requisites for membership among that righteous and holy society of just persons, who are to constitute the inheritors of the kingdom of God. Men are therefore required to keep Jehovah's commandments with their whole heart, and mind, and strength, throughout the whole period of their intellectual life."

When men ordinarily speak of the nature of that perfection required of them under the commandments of Jehovah, of doing what he has enjoined, or of abstaining from what he has forbidden, they use abstractions of whose import few persons have any definite comprehension, and hence there is in the minds of most persons a confused notion concerning these subjects, involving a half unintelligible apprehension of an enormous responsibility which they are utterly unable to bear. This notion is in direct contradic-

*Though I have on so many different occasions explained myself as to what is to be understood by human ability, yet I deem it proper in this place to again reiterate, that by human ability I do not mean any power inherent in mankind independent of their Creator, but simply that Jehovah has conferred such ability and power upon them, and placed them under the disposal of their own reason and will. In like manner, God has constituted men with arms and legs, but though we have received these members from him and are entirely dependent upon him for their use, yet Jehovah does not act upon mankind every time they move their arms and legs, otherwise he would be a partaker, or rather he would be the direct cause of all human sin. Jehovah therefore has endowed mankind with a certain ability as constituting them free agents, and they are responsible as such for the manner in which they may exercise their free agency.

tion not only to the general import of the Scripture, but also to Christ's express word, that his yoke is easy and his burthen is light.

But in order to appreciate this matter correctly, it will be necessary to look at it as based upon the phenomena pertaining to the intellectual capacities of mankind as beings placed by their Creator in a probationary condition.

We have already repeatedly shewn that the phenomena of our probationary state is not to operate upon Jehovah, but simply amounts to this, that our Creator instead of making mankind perfect at once, has required that they shall perfect themselves in righteousness by a voluntary self-discipline. He has made them competent to such an end by having endowed them with the necessary faculties and powers, and hence as being qualified to act as free agents, they are then left to themselves to attain to the requisite perfection or not, just as they may see fit.

The object to be accomplished by the perfection to which mankind may attain by voluntary self-discipline is very clear. The Scriptures inform us that Jehovah has prepared for the reception of the righteous, after the day of judgment, an everlasting kingdom in which only righteous and holy men shall be received. As the happiness of this future world is evidently implicated in some social condition of its inheritors, so it is self-evident that none but the righteous and holy can be received, for to admit persons who are not of such a character, would be to destroy the blessedness of the righteous by the intrusion of those who are not qualified for such an association.

That mankind may be properly disciplined in these particulars, they have not been left to form themselves upon a standard of perfection to be determined by their imperfect notions on that subject. Jehovah has therefore revealed to them one devised in his wisdom as most suitable for their preparation to the enjoyment of the future kingdom of heaven.

In the constitution of things established by Jehovah, he has not restricted mankind to any particular modes of living or occupation, we have his full approbation to follow any course suggested by the peculiarity of our organization, in order to obtain as much happiness as we can, whether individually or socially. The only manner in which the commandments of God do interfere with what men may prefer to do, is by the operation of two principles, the first of which concerns us personally, and the second as respects our conduct to other members of human society.

As regards our mere personal individuality, there are no pleasures or gratifications of which our intellectual, physical, or moral natures are susceptible, but what are allowed full indulgence, provided they be not carried to any prejudicial excess as concerns ourselves, or that they be not in any manner directly or indirectly injurious to our fellow creatures.*

As concerns our social agencies, we are required not only to avoid doing any thing offensive or hurtful to our fellow men, but that we do every thing consistent with our reasonable ability to promote their welfare and happiness, we are directed in either case of doing, or not doing, to estimate our conduct to others by the unerring rule of acting towards them in like manner as we would they should do to us.

But though these principles of moral action operate primarily upon mankind in promoting their present happiness in this life, yet correctly speaking, they are to be understood as only disciplining them for a future state of existence. Our ultimate condition is in eternity, and consequently the anticipation of this eternal state should be ever before us as the great end of our present intellectual and moral exertions.

As the end therefore of our probationary condition in the present life is, that men as intellectual moral free agents shall, through a voluntary discipline, become qualified as suitable associates for a society of happy creatures in eternity, so the particular modes through which christian perfection is to be accomplished are very distinct.

Mankind, as being intellectual free agents in a probationary state, with an organization highly susceptible of pleasure and pain, will necessarily exhibit the phenomena of such a constitution. They therefore in the first place will seek after their own immediate personal happiness. It is only gradually that they ascertain they cannot be happy but by making other persons participators in their gratifications. But at the same time their action in this respect is very partial, and limited to the smallest number possible; they feel little or no sympathy for the interest and welfare of the rest of mankind around them; their exertion being essentially directed to the augmentation of their personal consequence, reputation, or indulgences, and that of their families, and their immediate associates.

* If the reader requires a more explicit statement than this, he can refer back to Vol. I. 324, for an exposition of the nature of sin.

Such being the constitutional tendencies of mankind in general, it must be evident that the vices or the virtues of human nature, are separable by a mere line passing through the phenomena of our organization, as intellectual creatures highly sentient of pleasure and pain. As all our imperfections on one side of this line may be comprehended under the two heads of PRIDE and SELFISHNESS, so all our virtues will be found on the other side, under the two equally comprehensive heads of HUMILITY, (as merely opposed to Pride,) and BENEVOLENCE.

PRIDE consists in an overweening amount of personal self-sufficiency as compared with other persons. It is essentially an intellectual vice,* though it also comprehends the minor development of vanity, which is ordinarily accompanied with very little intellectuality.

SELFISHNESS is sufficiently defined in its etymology. It exhibits itself essentially under the two forms of *Sensuality* and *Covetousness*. The first, as sacrificing every consideration to personal indulgence, the second, as being regardless of the welfare of others when it is in our power to increase their happiness.

The injurious consequences of PRIDE and SELFISHNESS, whether to ourselves or others, may be summed up in a few words. As concerns the individual himself, pride is essentially detrimental in the fact, that a proud man is incapable either of intellectual or moral improvement. Puffed up in his self-sufficiency, he rejects at once any exposition that does not concur with his established opinions or preconceived views of things. Therefore, before he can correct either his infirmity of nature or his misjudgments, he must humble himself, that is, be willing to be taught something different from his proud assumption concerning the correctness or importance of his notions of things. As concerns other persons, the conduct and deportment of a proud man are highly offensive, as assuming a right of treating them contemptuously when they differ from him, or if they do not submit to the arrogance of his assumptions.

The injurious consequences of SELFISHNESS in its two manifestations of *Sensuality* and *Covetousness* are equally apparent. As respects Sensuality, it is wholly opposed to intellectual and moral improvement, and brutalizes the faculties themselves. As regards other men, the sensualist directly disregards their welfare whenever it interferes with his personal gratification. Covetousness is a

* The ordinary notion that pride is the sin of the rich and great, is most erroneous. They may be more vain and ostentatious, but as to pride, there is fully as much among the poorest and most dependent class of society.

greater or less absorption of the intellectual powers towards the mere accumulation of gain, which can only be accomplished by a systematic disregard of the happiness or welfare of other men proportionate to the degree of covetousness.

Pride and Selfishness being, I apprehend, the two radical vices of human nature, all other vices are either modifications of them, or proceed from our being thwarted by others in attempting to sustain or accomplish the purposes of our pride or selfishness. Hence injustice, anger, envy, hatred, strife, &c.

As pride and selfishness are the evil sources from which all other vices proceed, the great principles of that personal discipline inculcated in the Scriptures are, that we shall in the first place counteract by *humility*, our tendency towards an overweening conceit of ourselves, and in the second place, our tendency towards selfishness by an enlarged *benevolence*, *i. e.* love or charity in the practical application of the rule of Christ, *thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*

The principles upon which the theory of human probation has been constructed as preparing individuals for the enjoyment of the future kingdom of heaven, are therefore very clear. They contemplate, through a conscientious observance of the simple requirements of humility, temperance, and benevolence, the eradication of every imperfection of human nature; and to give them still greater influence on our understanding, we have been abundantly informed that those who will not qualify themselves unto perfection, shall not inherit the kingdom of God. It is scarcely necessary to refer to the enumeration made by Paul, (*Gal. v. 19—21.*) as to those who shall be excluded, for no one can for a moment admit the possibility of any state of happiness which would allow the intrusion of proud, vain, angry, selfish, sensual, and covetous persons into a society of holy and righteous men.

The Scriptures therefore require of us that amount of moral conduct or discipline that shall make us perfect in thought, word, and deed, and they only require obedience from us whether as doing those things that favor, or as abstaining from those things that impede our progress towards intellectual and moral perfection. Jehovah therefore requires from us not a partial amount of moral obedience, but the entire amount of our whole capacities, our *whole* heart, *whole* mind, and *whole* strength, and it is most reasonable that such absolute requirement should be made, for how could Jehovah require obedience in any less degree. If we do not give the entire obedience of our whole powers, what is to be done with

that part which is not thus employed? Is it to be used to counteract any portion of Jehovah's purposes? Is it to be used in such a manner as to fall short of perfection precisely as much in amount as is equal to the misuse of our powers? Nothing, therefore, can be more absurd than to suppose that Jehovah should require of us any thing less than our whole heart, and mind, and strength.*

On the other hand, this obedience is not a matter of such great difficulty as many persons appear to consider it. It is when properly estimated, while living as is most agreeable to ourselves, to strictly regulate our conduct by a careful observance of what Jehovah has required, so that our consciences shall acquit us of any neglect or disregard of his appointments as estimated by an honest, and not superstitious sense of duty. We are not required to torment ourselves by absurd and over-stretched notions of an impossible perfection, any more than we are to seek after it by voluntary abstinence from innocent gratifications. All our religion, as far as mere commandment is concerned, is to live soberly, love mercy, do justice, and walk humbly before God; which humility is not to be in a humility of our own devising, but a humble simple obedience to requirements made in the wisdom and goodness of our Creator, which are at the same time perfectly consistent with a cheerful, happy frame of mind. We may therefore avail ourselves of every blessing within our reach, ever mindful, however, that as our condition in the present life is one of mere training and preparation for an eternal state, so our desires and hopes must all be regulated by the great object thus proposed to our understanding and conscience.

Jehovah in making mankind both intellectual and moral free agents, who are to attain to the requisite perfection of their nature through their voluntary action, will necessarily judge them in both of these particulars. As to moral perfection in righteousness and holiness, every one sufficiently understands this subject as it applies

* This requirement to love God with all the heart, mind, soul, and strength, which by some persons is made a mere legal technicality, by which every one becomes obnoxious to damnation who falls short of *absolute perfection*, is by others assumed to be a *privilege* that men may, and therefore ought, under the grace of God to attain to this self-complacent state, it being implied that they themselves are such. The simple truth is, the requirement is mere matter of obligation that men are bound to accomplish to the utmost extent of their imperfect ability. If they fall short of their capacity in this respect, they shall either be rejected by God, or if not cast off, shall receive a less reward than if they had attained to a perfection that was within their power to have accomplished.

personally to individuals.* But with respect to our intellectual improvement, few seem to have a just apprehension. This is the more strange, as all christians admit that if a man has wealth, power, or influence, he is responsible before God for his right use of these advantages. The intellectual capacity of human nature, however, is the greatest endowment bestowed upon mankind, for it is the basis upon which all responsibility is constructed, and just in proportion to the degree of intellectuality that a man does possess, his responsibility is so much the greater, a circumstance that must be evident to the least reflection.

To what end has Jehovah placed mankind in a probationary state that explicitly requires from them the utmost exercise of their intellectual powers as free agents, if it could be supposed possible that God hereafter would receive those persons into the heavenly inheritance, who have not improved the ability they possessed. Such a supposition would wholly subvert the theory of human probation. It would imply the gross absurdity, that individuals who had not qualified themselves for the reward proposed for voluntary improvement, should nevertheless be rewarded though they had done nothing towards deserving it.

The practical deduction from this view of the personal intellectual responsibility of individuals, is therefore of the utmost importance, for it distinctly shews the gross delusion that prevails among the mass of thoughtless and irreligious persons, who suppose that if they do no harm, and hold an orthodox belief in Jesus Christ as the Redeemer and Saviour of all those who put their trust in him, that they may with perfect confidence look forward to an inheritance in the kingdom of God. Hence we hear so often from a dying person, "*I have never done any body any harm, and I am ready to die, throwing myself on the mercy of God, through the Lord Jesus Christ.*"

But never was any notion more contrary to the revelation made in the Scriptures than this. The acceptance of man with his Creator, is not on the ground of his having done no harm, but in the fact of his having diligently exerted himself to become perfect in all his intellectual and moral capacities. The condemnation will

* I will avail myself however of this opportunity to recommend to my readers Jonathan Dymond's Essays on Morality, as being by far the best work that I know upon that subject. The only material point in which I differ from him is on the subjects of resistance of oppression, and defensive war. He was a member of the Society of Friends, and as such maintains their doctrine. But as a work developing the principles of morality by the standard of the Scripture writings, his treatise is unrivaled as far as I am able to determine on the subject.

be, not that the individual has done any harm, but that he has not made himself worthy of the proposed reward by actual attainments in virtue and righteousness.* This principle is most distinctly exhibited to us by our Saviour in his parable of the talents. (*Math. xxv. 14—30.*) Those who had improved what was committed to them were rewarded proportionably. The one who had not improved his talent, *had done no harm, he had not misused it*, but he had not improved it, and therefore was rejected and condemned.

In thus introducing the subject of the intellectuality of human nature, every one must be aware that as it exists in very different degrees of intensity or excellence in different individuals, so their moral responsibility as to the right exercise of their intellectual powers, is proportionate to the amount of their capacity.

Allowing therefore, that none shall enter the future kingdom of heaven but those who have attained to a relative perfection in righteousness and personal holiness, and that all who do attain to this perfection shall indubitably be received into that kingdom, it is a most momentous subject of consideration, whether a righteous man has properly exercised his intellectual capacity as concerns himself personally, or in the influence that he has or ought to have exercised in that society in which his lot has been cast. The correct estimate of this matter is of very great importance, for though the lowest degree of responsibility involves his mere personal loss as receiving a less reward than one which he might have obtained, so the highest degree of personal responsibility involves consequences before Jehovah, which may disqualify a righteous man for any other condition than that alluded to by our Saviour, where he says, “he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven.” In this fact the degradation becomes a deserved punishment to an intellectual man, who can but admit his culpability in this respect.

On the subject of intellectual responsibility it must be evident, that in the first place, every righteous man is bound to attain to the most perfect comprehension of the divine scheme or dispensation under which he is placed, so that he may be able to exert a correct

* In making this remark I hope no one will misapprehend me so far as to suppose that it implies any disregard of the doctrine of our salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. The ensuing section is devoted to the consideration of that subject. I take no notice of it in the present discourse, because propriety requires me to first state the absolute requirements of Jehovah from human obedience, and not until this has been fully stated, can I treat upon the mode by which a penitent transgressor may obtain pardon for his previous disobedience to the requirements of his Creator.

intellectual and moral influence upon his children, his associates, or society at large. Every christian is bound to be a preacher or instructor in the principles of Christianity. But he can only do so properly who fully comprehends the truth himself. But as knowledge neither comes from inspiration, nor necessarily in any one sectarian scheme of Christianity, so every man is under the responsibility of being intellectually convinced as to the truth of any opinion he may hold, or any doctrine he may advocate. No man must assume that the doctrines of his sect are necessarily true. He must ascertain the truth for himself by a proper investigation of the subject, and if he finds himself involved in perplexities and difficulties, he is not to throw himself into the arms of some sectarian theological system as if a sure refuge, but he is to seek opportunities of instruction and the solutions of contending sectaries, and a prayerful examination of the scope and bearing of the Scripture writings, until he can become convinced of the truth; and if he cannot find any conviction he is to honestly confess it, and not allow others to think that he believes what he does not believe.

Such a proceeding as this as applied to persons of comparatively low intellectual capacity, of limited education, and small opportunities for improvement, may in the estimation of some persons be regarded as utterly impracticable. That it is attended with serious difficulties there can be no doubt, but still what else can be done? Men as intellectual creatures are capable of intellectual improvement, and therefore as having such capacity they are bound to improve to the utmost of their ability. If, after taking all the pains they can to improve, by striving to correct erroneous notions or doctrines, by striving to ascertain what God has required from mankind, if the individual makes no progress, or even falls into involuntary error, still he has done his duty and God will not overlook his exertions. The man shall be rewarded for the conscientiousness with which he sought to know his Maker's will that he might do it.

That any other course than the above can be suggested I am unable to comprehend. To say men ought to rely upon churches or clergymen as to their views of what is required from human faith or obedience, we might as well be told to determine the subject by tossing a piece of money into the air; for to what church or to what clergy are we to refer? The accident of our being born of parents of any particular religious denomination has no more connection with truth than it has with the phases of the moon.

But this reference to a church or clergy is after all founded on a reasonable principle, however erroneous in the application, for the evident ground for such consultation is, that the clergy as being both religious and intellectual men, through their presumed knowledge of the Scriptures are supposed to be qualified to instruct persons who have less intellectual capacity, learning, or opportunity for making such investigations. The error in the matter is, that as the differences between churches and clergies are irreconcilable as they now exist, so the reference to any one in particular is mere prejudice, and which instead of guiding a man into truth would essentially in the majority of such references lead him away from it.

Now upon this condition of things arises the peculiar responsibility of all devout intellectual men, be they of whatever denomination they may. They are as such the only persons by whom the world at large can be assisted in coming to right conclusions upon every subject pertaining to their welfare, temporal or spiritual; and hence if there is error, delusion and misjudgment among the mass of mankind, the intellectual class of men are especially responsible for it according to their action or non-action in the case.

The influence therefore of an intellectual man becomes a matter of very serious consideration to him personally. In the first place, before he either approves or condemns any thing he must honestly investigate the subject so as to form a correct opinion; for though no man can be answerable for involuntary error who has exerted himself to know the truth, yet he is responsible if he has not diligently enquired into the actual merits of the subject.

As to a righteous man, much less a christian, teaching any thing that he does not believe to be true, it is manifestly impossible, for it would be the direct violation of his principles, and therefore I need say nothing further on that matter. But intellectual and righteous christians have been obnoxious to a severe condemnation in the fact of their intellectual responsibility, in not opposing human error and mistake, in not assailing established errors, and in suppressing their real sentiments on subjects deemed of importance in the world. No intellectual man can be innocent before God, who conceals his opinions before men upon any subject where there is a proper occasion to do so. If any opinion, practice, or institution, be of divine warrant, let such a person approve it, if it be not from divine appointment let him condemn it, if it be doubtful as to its warranty, let that doubtfulness be honestly expressed; for the fact that the merits of any controverted question are doubtful, and incapable of

satisfactory solution, is one of the most important determinations of human sagacity and wisdom, and to which conclusion mankind are as justly entitled as any other intellectual inference whatever.

That the suppression of our real opinions as to any truth, or as to the impossibility of coming to a consistent deduction concerning any subject, is criminal in an intellectual man before God must be evident to the simplest capacity. Let him ask himself why he suppresses his opinion or convictions. If this is done through a regard to other men's opinion or influence, or to answer some purpose of personal advantage, or to avoid the consequences of prejudice, dislike, or persecution, it is perfectly clear that such person is unfaithful before God in his individual responsibility, as well as towards his fellow men who through ignorance are acting wrongfully.

This is not meant to imply that a man should in the spirit of pride offend and insult others by his censures or reproaches, he is to act with christian meekness and gentleness in the case, and if he finds himself incapable of such a temper in setting up to be a reformer, he has mistaken his vocation.

The obliquity of intellectual men in these particulars is the more criminal in the fact, that Jehovah has placed the temporal happiness and religious improvement of mankind exclusively under the control of intellectual men. There is no fact more prominent in the past history of the world than this. Nations have continued for ages plunged in the deepest ignorance, subjected to the utmost oppression whether of civil or ecclesiastical rulers, and still there was no deliverance until these evil and oppressive states of things broke down under the influence of intellectual men attacking or demonstrating the abuses. The ordinary opinion that the great political or ecclesiastical revolutions that have taken place among mankind are referrible to the Almighty, as having raised up men by his secret influences to accomplish such objects, I apprehend cannot be sustained either by the Scripture or by any investigation of human history. Jehovah appears to have left the whole matter in human hands, and not until they act, or begin to act, does he co-operate with them. Then if their motives be pure and righteous, he does assist them, not as controlling their free agencies by any supernatural guidance, but by increasing their intellectual discernment as to the principle of his requirements, and which consequently does not interfere in any manner with their personal responsibilities, since they are free either to adopt or reject what is thus secretly suggested to their understanding or conscience.

I apprehend the whole past history of mankind justifies such an interpretation in the circumstance, that patriots and martyrs who have hitherto led the battles fought for the welfare of mankind, have been men who were merely a little in advance of the more intellectual portion of society. Their action often involved very imperfect views of what was right or most beneficial: in short, they have exhibited none of those peculiar marks of divine influence or guidance which would indicate the directing agencies of the spirit of God.

Hitherto we have spoken of those things that regard our personal responsibilities either as concerns our individual sobriety of life, or our moral conduct towards our fellow creatures. Let us now enquire what are the commandments that the Scriptures teach us are due from us as matters of obligation to Jehovah. What is the service that he requires from us, as to himself *personally*? What is it that he forbids us to do, as being offensive to himself *personally*? What is it he has required of us, as being grateful or acceptable to him *personally*? Nothing, nothing, nothing, unless it be in the negative sense that we do not worship fictitious gods, treat him with profane contempt, or undertake to approach him in any manner that he has not expressly declared to be acceptable to him; or in other words, that sin of will-worship into which mankind have so often lapsed, and concerning which we have ample proof that he regards it with the utmost displeasure.

The only acceptable manner we can live before Jehovah, is to observe his commandments as maintaining a perfect sobriety of conduct as regards ourselves personally; as exercising mercy, benevolence, or charity to our fellow creatures; and relying with the most implicit confidence upon every promise he has made us under the most adverse condition of things to which we may be exposed. Consequently, to love God with all our heart, and mind, and strength, means nothing else but an honest, faithful, but not superstitious observance of those things which he has required, and to await with unshaken confidence the ultimate fulfilment of every thing he has promised to our faith.

But when we consider that Jehovah is the author of our being, the source of whatever happiness we do or can enjoy, the merciful father ever ready to forgive his repentant children, and the promiser of eternal happiness to every one who shall seek salvation from him,—it is impossible if we duly consider these things, that we should not love him for his mercy and goodness, and do all that is in our power to glorify his name among our fellow men. But we

can only do this by our implicit obedience to his requirements, and by inducing other persons to come and receive of him those blessings which he is more ready to give than men are to ask.

As it is therefore evident that the obedience that Jehovah requires from mankind are concerning matters that both personally and socially, directly or indirectly, promote human happiness; so it is equally evident that the only real trial to which we are subjected, consists in our absolute perseverance in the obedience of our faith, (*i. e.* in our trust and confidence in Jehovah,) under all the circumstances that may attend our life. Whatever may be the conditions of our being, however much we may be exposed to temptations, to the ills of life, to persecution, or annoyance for conscience sake, we are still required to be firm in our obedience to his commandments, to trust in his promises, and never to abandon that confidence though a painful death be the only alternative.

This persevering constancy in maintaining our religious profession under adverse circumstances where an alternative is offered, is what is called bearing our cross. It is the endurance of any tribulation for conscience sake, it is adhering in all faithfulness to Jehovah's requirements, and never abandoning our confidence in him however much the world may despise or persecute us; and it does not consist in bearing any of the mere common ills of life or the contingencies to which every human creature is liable. These we must bear with christian patience, but they are not bearing our cross: the bearing of our cross is to endure every thing rather than violate our faith or allegiance to Jehovah as set forth in the gospel of Jesus Christ, and has no other significance.

I apprehend I have now sufficiently explained the nature of that perfection that Jehovah requires of mankind, and also that it implies the entire obedience of our whole heart, and mind, and strength; consequently any neglect or disobedience in any one particular, however small we may estimate it, is a direct sin against him, whereby we become obnoxious to whatever penalty he has announced against human disobedience.

ON SALVATION BY FAITH THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.

The second statement of that summary of the principles of the Christian Dispensation made at page 56, which requires our further consideration, is as follows:

“ But notwithstanding the absolute perfection of the obedience thus required from mankind, Jehovah nevertheless recognizes their

inability to maintain this perfect obedience at all times and under all circumstances, by having constituted a Redeemer or Saviour for them in Jesus Christ. He, in the incomprehensible purposes of Jehovah, after having suffered an ignominious death, then arose from the dead, and ascended to heaven, where he evermore exists a mediator or high priest for mankind. Hence all persons coming to Jehovah through him, will have their past sins forgiven them for Jesus Christ's sake, provided they be truly penitent, and firmly resolved to live righteously before Jehovah in all things for the future."

This is that doctrine of salvation by faith through Jesus Christ, which every reader of the New Testament is aware, constituted the principal topic of all those discourses which the apostles addressed to their followers, as being the only means by which all generations of christians are to be delivered from the consequences of their transgressions.

There is no doctrine taught in the Scripture that has given rise to more unintelligible controversy among professing christians, than the one that teaches that our salvation is of faith through Jesus Christ; and as christians have so much perplexed themselves on the subject, we need scarcely mention that it has been entirely incomprehensible to sceptics and deists. There is however no ground for perplexity if men will only take up the consideration of the subject as it is communicated in the Scripture; for it is so distinctly announced in its terms, and has been so familiarly illustrated in the apostolic writings, that no man of ordinary intelligence, unperverted by theological speculations, will find any difficulty in comprehending it distinctly.

To bring the subject fairly before the reader, it will be only necessary that he adverts to the doctrine established in our preceding discourse, where we shewed that the obedience which Jehovah requires from mankind, involves the utmost exertion of their whole voluntary powers, *viz.* Thou shalt love, (*i.e.* obey with devout regard,) the Lord thy God, with *all* thy heart, and with *all* thy mind, and with *all* thy strength. And thou shalt love, (*i. e.* regard by the same rule,) thy neighbor as thyself.

It is therefore evident that we commit sin before Jehovah, not only by any breach of his commandments, but also whenever we fail to exert the utmost amount of our strength and ability in complying with his requirements; and hence if a man disregards the appointments of Jehovah, and lives a profligate, or an irreligious life, he becomes obnoxious to all the judgments announced by God against such conduct, and must necessarily suffer the consequences.

Let us now suppose that an irreligious man has become fully convinced of his liability to this condemnation, and desires to escape the threatened punishment. Upon what principle can he have his past irreligion or wickedness forgiven; by what means can he be reconciled to his Maker? His pardon assuredly must be from the grace or goodness of Jehovah. Since even among mankind, a transgressor cannot undertake to appoint the terms of reconciliation that his offended neighbor must receive, how much less can this be the case between a man and the sovereign ruler of the universe, when the individual has heretofore either disregarded his known requirements, or has willfully violated his express injunctions.

If any one therefore seeks forgiveness from God for past sin, he must implicitly conform to the requirements of Jehovah on that subject. Now he has appointed a mode that is plainly set forth in the New Testament, and which in the *first place*, distinctly consists in asking pardon for *past sin* through the merits and intercession of Jesus Christ as the only medium of human salvation.

But in *the second place*, the pardon thus offered to mankind through *faith in Jesus Christ*, is not given to those who merely regard him as the Messiah, and that he died to obtain salvation for mankind. A man who merely believes this, only recognizes the theory of the office of Jesus Christ, but he does not believe in him as required in the New Testament. To obtain pardon or salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, it is equally essential, 1st, That a man be sincerely penitent for all his past disobedience. 2d, That he henceforth wholly abandons every thing pertaining to his former sinful course of life. 3d, That he shall for the future strive to the utmost to live a godly, righteous, sober life, seeking after perfection in holiness, under an open and public recognition of Jesus Christ as his only Lord and Saviour. Unless a man complies with each of these requirements he has not faith in Jesus Christ as set forth in the New Testament.

But if the repenting sinner comes to Jehovah truly sorrowful for his past transgressions, with a firm resolution to live righteously in all things for the future, and then asks pardon of God for Jesus Christ's sake, all his past sins, be they what they may, will then be forgiven him. He is then in Scripture language justified,* *i. e.* pardoned, and is furthermore adopted into the household of God, and if he henceforth strives to live in all righteousness, he will

* Archbishop Tillotson has two admirable discourses on this subject in vol. xi. of his Sermons, viz. the second and third discourses on John xx. 31.

through the grace of God, be sustained in his exertions, and will be ultimately received into that everlasting kingdom of heaven, which has been in preparation for the righteous, according to Jehovah's purpose, from the foundations of the world. Thus his salvation is of faith in Jesus Christ. It commenced in an entire and absolute reliance upon him as the Saviour of mankind from the consequences of their sins, and it is consummated by an implicit conformity to all his requirements, by henceforth striving to attain to the utmost perfection that human nature can accomplish.

The difficulty with uninstructed persons towards correctly appreciating this doctrine, simply arises from a confusion of ideas respecting the signification of the terms, *faith* or *belief*, *have faith* or *believe*, which in their ordinary sense merely imply intellectual assent, but which in the Scriptures are always used as involving intellectual or moral action as *the necessary result* of intellectual assent. Thus to believe in God invariably signifies in the Scriptures, *the doing of whatever he has appointed to be done*. For if a man does believe in Jehovah as exhibited in the Scriptures, he will assuredly do whatever Jehovah has required.

But this trust, faith or reliance upon the promises of Jehovah does not imply the submission of the human understanding as to what any body of clergy may assert on the subject, but it is the result of intellectual inferences deduced from Scriptural statements, by which the individual becomes convinced of the reasonableness of such faith or confidence. This matter has been so forcibly exhibited to us in the reasoning of the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, that I shall use his arguments as shewing in the clearest light the absolutely mere intellectual origin of the faith required of the disciples of Jesus Christ.*

* The definition of faith given in *Heb. xi. 1*, as rendered in our translation, is confused and unmeaning, it ought to have been translated paraphrastically. Now faith is *the firm and assured expectation* of things hoped for, the *conviction of the truth* of things not seen.—*Sam. Clarke, Serm. on Heb. xi. 6*, and *John xx. 29*.—*Bloomf. Greek Test. in loco*; *Dr. Adam Clarke*; *Pyle paraphrase*, &c.—See also *Syriac New Testament*.

On this subject I subjoin the following observations from *Locke* on the Understanding, book 4, chap. 17. “Faith is nothing but a firm assent of the mind, which if it be regulated as is our duty, cannot be given to any thing but upon good reason; and so cannot be opposite to it. He that believes without having any reason for believing, may be in love with his own fancies; but neither seeks truth as he ought, nor pays the obedience due to his Maker who would have him use those discerning faculties he has given him to keep him out of mistake and error. He that does not this to the best of his power, however he sometimes lights upon truth is in the right but by chance, and I know not whether the luckiness of the accident will excuse the irregularity of his proceeding. This at least is certain,

Noah according to this epistle, having been *forewarned of God* concerning the coming deluge, then *built the ark*, by which he and his family were saved. In other words, Noah *believed* what Jehovah had said, and then saved himself and family by diligently laboring in the construction of a work, that possibly employed him above a hundred years. His *faith* in Jehovah's word was thus exercised by continual action during all this time, and the end was his salvation from the deluge.

In consequence of Abraham's faith, *i. e.* his trust or confidence in the promise of Jehovah that he should have a numerous posterity through his son Isaac, he did not hesitate to prepare his son to be put to death as a sacrifice when required by Jehovah; accounting that God would assuredly fulfil his promise, (*i. e.* of a numerous posterity through Isaac,) even if it required him to be raised up again from the dead.

But the clearest illustration that the faith required in the Scripture involves nothing else than the exercise of the understanding, in making direct inferences from facts or truths recognized as the basis for correct reasoning, is stated in the case of the harlot Rahab. (*Heb. xi. 31.*) “*By faith the harlot Rahab perished not,*” &c.

Now what was her faith? Rahab was a woman, to say the least, of very doubtful moral character, a heathen, and utterly ignorant of the mercies of that covenant which Jehovah had given to the Jews at Mount Sinai. There was not therefore a particle of religion *in her faith*, and yet she was saved from the calamity that befel the inhabitants of Jericho, by a faith that the author of the epistle to the Hebrews adduces as illustrating the nature of *that faith*, by which those who believe in Jesus Christ should attain to an everlasting salvation.

The faith by which Rahab was saved is very distinct. She informs us (*Joshua ii. 9, &c.*) that she had heard what Jehovah the God of the Jewish people had done for them. That he had by mighty miracles compelled the Egyptians, then the most renowned of nations, to release them from bondage. That the waters of the

that he must be accountable for whatever mistakes he runs into: whereas he that makes use of the light and faculties that God has given him, and seeks sincerely to discover truth by those helps and abilities he has, may have this satisfaction in doing his duty as a rational creature, that though he should miss the truth, he will not miss the reward of it. For he governs his assent right and places it as he should, who in any case or matter whatsoever believes or disbelieves according as reason directs him. He that doeth otherwise, transgresses against his own light, and misuses those faculties which were given him to no other end but to search and follow the clearer evidence and greater probability.”

Red sea had been miraculously divided to afford them a passage into Arabia. She had heard that Jehovah had promised the Jews the conquest of the land of Canaan, that they had already destroyed the Amorites, beyond the Jordan, and were now marching against Jericho under the providential superintendence of the same powerful God.

Without having any knowledge whatever of the infinite excellencies of Jehovah, Rahab simply argued that he was far more powerful than the gods of the Egyptians, of the Amorites, or of any other gods of whom she had heard, and therefore as being thus greater and mightier she rationally inferred that Jericho wherein she resided, would inevitably fall before the Jews as assisted by the power of their God. Her mind being thus intellectually convinced by the inferences she had made, she then adopted a mode of conduct that would preserve her and her relatives from the anticipated destruction. She therefore saved the lives of the spies, and made a compact with them, by which she and her relations were to be exempt from the calamities impending over her townsmen. Rahab therefore was saved by *her faith*, *i.e.* her belief of what would come to pass, but mediately by the action induced by that belief, for if she had not preserved the lives of the spies and made a covenant with them, her mere belief of what would take place in the destruction of Jericho would have availed her nothing.*

In like manner the apostles after having proclaimed to the world what had been accomplished by Jesus Christ, and what was required by him from all his disciples, they then offered salvation to mankind through him, by calling on them to forsake all unrighteousness, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom they should have forgiveness of sins. Why the apostles used the terms believe on Jesus Christ, or have faith in Jesus Christ, is therefore perfectly plain: it involved not only an implicit confidence or reliance upon the declaration of Jehovah to forgive human sin for Jesus Christ's sake, but it also expressly required of every one to perform whatever action or conduct was incidental to the elaboration of that faith or belief.

* A similar exhibition of the purely intellectual nature of faith is given in the history of the Roman centurion; (*Math. viii. 5-10*) and of the Canaanitish woman. (*Math. xv. 22-28*.) There can be no doubt as to this matter, since they were both heathens. They had however either seen or heard of the miracles performed by Christ, and they therefore inferred his ability to help them. On this reason therefore, they implored his mercy and assistance.

This doctrine is so clear in its import that no one ought to misunderstand it. No christian or indeed no sane man can suppose, that a mere profession of faith in Jesus Christ can profit a person who does not repent of his past evil conduct, or who proposes to live for the future in the same irreligious manner as he had done heretofore. Common sense as well as the Scripture require a penitent not only to be heartily sorry for his past sins, but to renounce them for the future, and by a strict conformity to Jehovah's requirements, to strive henceforth after righteousness and holiness to perfection.*

Faith in Jesus Christ is therefore a complex idea. It not only implies firm and implicit assent as to the theory of his office, functions, and power to save, but also a moral and intellectual conduct corresponding to the requirements annexed to that assent.

But notwithstanding the clearness with which this doctrine is laid down in the Scriptures, the theologians have utterly perplexed mankind on the subject, through an absurd controversy among themselves concerning good works as involved in the scheme of human salvation. One party to this controversy quote Paul, as affirming that we are saved alone through the grace of God altogether irrespective of our works, and therefore, they say that good works are not essential to salvation. The other party contend that good works are so necessary to salvation, that we cannot be saved without them, and consequently they are meritorious before God. The whole perplexity of this dispute proceeds from the theologians overlooking the theory of mankind's probationary condition as intellectual and moral free agents, and in consequence of which oversight the reasoning of the apostles on the subject of good works is wholly misunderstood. Now the fact is that the apostles speak of good works at different times; under two different points of view; sometimes as being supposed to be propitiatory of past sin, and at other times as being mere matters of human obligation or duty.

* The following observations of Jortin, (*Ser. on Acts* iii. 26,) are so pertinent that I shall extract them: "And yet many christians have been too apt to entertain wrong notions concerning the terms of salvation. They consider Christ rather as a Saviour and a Redeemer, than as a Reformer and a Sanctifier. They consider him as acting like a sovereign prince who should deliver insolvent debtors from prison, or sign a pardon for malefactors under sentence of death. This is true in some sense: but it is not the whole truth, &c. Our Lord preached remission of sins upon repentance, *remission of those sins which men had committed before he had preached to them*: but thenceforwards he required obedience as a condition absolutely necessary for salvation, &c. The various superstitions and enthusiasms which have so pestered the christian world, have arisen partly *from not attending to this*, and partly from substituting other things in the room of a sober and regular course of life."

Whenever the apostles argue against the insufficiency of good works, or magnify faith without works, it is when they are contending against the supposition that ceremonial observances, or any works of man's devising can *propitiate for past sin*, and their reasoning on that subject is perfectly clear.

Paul in vindicating the scheme of our salvation through Jesus Christ, was continually engaged in contending against the notions of the christianized Jews, who required an observance of the ceremonial institutions of Moses. These converted Jews contended under the theory of the Realists, that the institutions of the law of Moses were in themselves absolutely recommendatory of the observer in the sight of God, who had given an express sanction to them in their original enactment. Hence they taught that men could not be saved unless they were circumcised, and kept *all the ceremonial appointments of the Mosaical institutions.**

But Paul asserted as a Nominalist, that there was nothing *inherently excellent* in the ceremonial law, that it should on that account *necessarily* draw down God's favor or blessing on its observance. He contended that the salvation God had promised to the Jews if they observed the ceremonial law in former times, was of *mere grace*, and not from any inherent excellence of the institutions themselves.

And surely this doctrine is alone consistent with every principle of common sense, for as it is impossible that man can do any thing that *in itself* can be useful or acceptable to God, who has made mankind, the world, and all things in it, so if God has declared that he will accept any obedience from man, it is of his *grace alone*, and not for the value or excellence of the work itself, let that be what it may.

Paul therefore insists upon the fact, that it is impossible for any man to be accepted of his Creator, but by doing those very things that *God has required*, and none other. If a man therefore believes

* "The error which is perhaps the commonest among Protestants on this point," says Archbishop Whately, *Essays* iii. 368, (note) "is that of forgetting that 'the works' by which the Pharisees sought 'to establish their own righteousness, which was of the law,' were not the performance of *moral duties*, but *ceremonial observances*; which in fact they were accustomed to regard as a substitute for the weightier matters of the 'law, judgment, mercy, and faith.' (*Math.* xxiii. 23.) So far from resting their justification on the strict morality of their lives, we find them not only repeatedly censured by our Lord for their gross immorality, but spoken of by Paul (*Rom.* ii. 17, 24,) as bringing a scandal on their religion in the eyes of the Gentiles by their notorious violations of their moral law. (See *Math.* xxiii. 14, 27.)"

that Jehovah will be faithful in his promises, he diligently strives to be acceptable in his sight by keeping his commandments; and the blessing or favor of God will be bestowed upon such person, not because the work or action he may perform is of any *inherent excellence* in itself, and as such grateful to the Deity, but simply in the circumstance, that it was an act of obedience to the requirement of his Maker.

In former times, urges this great apostle, it is true that Jehovah accepted ceremonial institutions, sacrifices, &c. from the Jewish people as propitiatory acts, because he had of his grace promised so to regard them as being indicative of their *faith*, *i. e.* of their reliance upon his promises. But now he has promised to forgive those who, repenting of their sins, seek their salvation upon a similar principle of *faith*, through Jesus Christ as the propitiation for sin, and as a mediator and intercessor for the penitent.

Hence the argument of Paul to the Galatians, chap. iii. 11, expressly asserting that salvation under every dispensation of Jehovah had been always predicated upon the principle of faith, *i. e.* reliance upon God's promises or requirements. The force of Paul's argument is not ordinarily perceived in consequence of the erroneous notion that the prophet Habakkuk (chap. ii. 4,) to whom Paul refers, predicted merely the future salvation of men through faith in Jesus Christ. The prophet however in saying "the just shall live by faith," announces an abstract proposition applicable to every Dispensation. Under the Jewish Dispensation, this faith was shewn by the obedience of men to all the requirements of Jehovah in view of obtaining salvation from him. Under the Christian Dispensation, that salvation is obtained through faith in his promise, by coming to him in the name of Jesus Christ, whom he has designated as the only mean by which human sin will be forgiven.

Paul therefore, says most truly, that we are alone saved, *i. e.* justified or pardoned by *the grace of God*, for we cannot atone for our sins by any acts of our own device, be they what they may. Salvation, or deliverance from the judgments denounced by Jehovah against sin, is a boon from him offered of his own grace to human faith, and not a concession to any worship or service that men may consider to be good and excellent. In other words, Jehovah chooses to pardon and bless the penitent who seeks his favor in the way he has promised to accept; there can be nothing done that can extort this favor from him, and consequently, he dispenses his pardon or his favor on whatever terms he may see fit. It becomes

the act of our free agency to decide whether we will accept it or not, as we have already shewn, Vol. I. 329.

The only difficulty that can possibly remain on any one's mind on this subject, may be from not properly understanding what is meant in the Scripture by the term *good works*; for under false notions of philosophy or of theology, many persons suppose that good works, instead of being mere requirements from human obedience as accomplishing personal righteousness, are simple acts of benevolence, such as alms-giving, subscribing money for promoting charitable, or religious enterprises, in short, by doing any thing of a laudable kind, which they delusively consider they may either perform or let alone just as they please, but that when they do perform them with a good intention, that then they are meritorious as good works. But nothing can be more erroneous than such notions, for by the requirements of Jehovah we are to give alms, and promote the interests of morality and religion to the utmost extent of our ability *as matters of duty*, and he that forbears to do so when he has the ability is directly guilty of sin. We are required to do all that we can, and every man is able to judge of his ability. He that gives more than his means justify, or attempts to do more than his condition or influence can rationally be expected to accomplish, is a downright fool. Jehovah requires only what a man can fairly do under his peculiar circumstances of life, and does not require from him more than is consistent with his mere ability. It is not what we give or do that can be acceptable to Jehovah, who made all things by the expression of the mere words, *Let such things be*; our acceptance with him is alone in the perfection to which we attain through the conscientious and rational exercise of the understanding, the affections, or the wealth, *he has given us*.

Seeing then that Jehovah has required as the attainment of perfection the utmost exertion of all our ability, *to wit*, the whole heart, and mind, and strength, as the performance of *mere duty*, so it is utterly impossible that any man can excel himself, or do more good works than his Creator has required from him *as mere obedient service*, and consequently it is absurd to the last degree for any one to suppose that he can perform any supererogatory good work. Therefore we can only be forgiven our sins by the favor or mercy of Jehovah, which he has promised us if we will humble ourselves before him, and ask for pardon through the merits and intercession of Jesus Christ. Consequently, nothing can be clearer than that our salvation is of faith, and is not, neither can be, of works, unless a

man should keep the whole law of Jehovah perfectly in all its requirements, throughout all his life, and never transgress or fall short in a single instance, which we need not hesitate to assert is impossible to any finite, and necessarily imperfect creature.

But after having thus shewn that our justification or pardon is of God's grace alone through faith in Jesus Christ, wholly irrespective of any good works, which indeed we have shewn above to be impossible in *a propitiatory sense*, the ordinary advocates of the doctrine of justification by faith only, have then commonly fallen into utter absurdity concerning the nature and value of good works as required, *after a man has been justified*; and the consequence has been not only an entire misapprehension of the Scriptures on the subject, but they have established a doctrine that is wholly unsustained by the Scripture. Thus in the common theology of our time, a converted man is taught that he must henceforth live altogether by faith in Jesus Christ, and to perfect that faith by holiness of life, which they interpret to consist in a direct and personal communion of spirit with Christ, and which anticipates that their ultimate salvation at the last day will be only as the result of their spiritual union with him. This is that doctrine of *salvation by grace, alone*, of which we hear so much at times, and whose erroneous foundation we have shewn Vol. I. 329. According to the advocates of this opinion, righteousness and moral conduct are asserted to be only evidences of a sound faith, and as such they carry it out into practice by offering justification and pardon to any dying person however irreligious and wicked he may have been, who on a death bed professes faith in Christ, and throws himself on his mercy and goodness as the only salvation for sinners.

These erroneous and mischievous notions have proceeded from two sources, *first*, in misapprehending Paul's reasoning concerning the inefficiency of good works as *propitiating for past sin*, but which theologians have construed in an *absolute sense*, as if applicable to all good works, at all times, and under all circumstances. As we have already shewn the fallacy of this reasoning, by pointing out the difference between good works as being supposed *propitiatory*, or as being the mere requirements of *obedience*, it will be unnecessary to recapitulate our arguments on that subject. The *second* source of error proceeds from theologians disregarding the fundamental circumstance of the probationary condition of mankind before their Creator, who requires them as free agents of a

moral and intellectual capacity, to attain to a required perfection through their own voluntary action.

In order to correct both of these misjudgments, let us exhibit the true condition of those persons who have been converted and justified by faith in Jesus Christ.

After the penitent sinner has been truly converted, and his sins forgiven for Jesus Christ's sake, he is then adopted into the household of God, and as a son, is entitled through the mediation of Jesus Christ to all the privileges that belong to his new relation towards Jehovah. But though he has now great privileges bestowed upon him, where does the Scripture justify the notion that his condition is changed as to his being an intellectual moral free agent, who is to attain to perfection through his own voluntary agencies. The original scheme of man's probationary condition is not changed or superceded by the circumstance that as a penitent transgressor, his past sins have been forgiven, and his privileges increased. On the contrary, the essential principle involved in the fact of his having been pardoned through his faith in Jesus Christ, is, that he shall *henceforth live a godly righteous life, striving after holiness unto perfection.* How then is he to fulfil this resolution but by works of righteousness, temperance, patience, benevolence, &c.

If any one should be at a loss on this subject, let him consider the exhibition made by the Old Testament, that school-master according to Paul, to instruct us concerning Christ. If we examine the fourth, fifth, and sixth chapters of Leviticus, we shall there find the particular propitiation stated, that every penitent should make when he had transgressed the commandments of Jehovah. *First*, the individual was required to make confession of his sin, and the necessary reparation where the case admitted it. *Secondly*, if he then brought an ox, a lamb, two pigeons, or a small quantity of flour, according to his ability, and with them made the appointed sacrifice, then Jehovah promised that "*his sin should be forgiven him.*"

Now did the pardon which Jehovah accorded to the Jewish penitent after this atonement, release him from a future obedience to a law that required of him a perfect obedience in every good work? Who can suppose any thing so insane? It is just as insane to suppose that the forgiveness of our past sin through the propitiation of Jesus Christ, dispenses with the least performance for the future of every good work to our utmost ability.

But nothing can be said on this subject more plainly than what is urged in the New Testament. The apostles in every portion of

their writings earnestly and continually press upon their converted disciples the necessity of observing all good works, and of striving after perfection in all well doing. They caution their followers against any remissness of their duties, and that they take great heed lest they should fall. They tell them to work out their salvation with fear and trembling, and in full confirmation of these general instructions, in every intimation that is given us of the judgment of the last day in the New Testament, it is invariably stated that mankind shall be judged according to their works. In no instance whatever is it ever implied that any one shall be accepted at the last day on account of his faith, or for the orthodoxy of his belief. Under all this evidence, direct and indirect, nothing can be more unwarrantable than the ordinary teaching of clergymen on these subjects, who by their theology have set aside the plainest requirements of the Scripture.*

The salvation offered to mankind through Jesus Christ in the New Testament is primarily as pardon for past sin or transgression. (*Rom.* iii. 25.) It is retrospective altogether. It obliterates past sin, but it does not change the intellectual and moral responsibilities of the penitent as a free agent, who is required to attain to righteousness unto perfection through his own exertions; and still less does it supply any deficiencies of personal holiness and righteousness by any imputation of the merits of Christ. The truly converted christian merely has his past sins forgiven for Christ's sake, in order that he shall henceforth strive to live acceptably before God in the attainment of personal holiness and righteousness. It

* That the ultimate acceptance of mankind at the day of judgment is exclusively on account of their works, (*i. e.* their attainments in righteousness,) is abundantly sustained by the following references to the New Testament:

First, as a general proposition. *Math.* xvi. 27; *John* v. 28, 29; *Rom.* ii. 5, 6; 2 *Cor.* v. 10; *Gal.* vi. 7, 8; *Rev.* ii. 23; xx. 12, 13; xii. 12.

Second, as specifying acts of mercy, benevolence, temperance, &c. *Math.* xxv. 31—40; *Gal.* v. 22, 23.

Third, as specifying acts of unmercifulness, and want of benevolence. *Math.* xxv. 41—46.

Fourth, as requiring men to do to others as they ask God to do to them. *Math.* vi. 14, 15; *Mark* xi. 25, 26.

Fifth, as announcing condemnation at the last day on certain immoralities *Rom.* ii. 1—9; *Gal.* v. 19—21; *Ephes.* v. 5, 6; *Coloss.* ii. 5, 6.

Sixth, as stating men shall not be justified by their outward profession of faith or privileges. *Math.* vii. 21—23; *Luke* xiii. 26, 27; *Rom.* ii. 13, 21, 22.

Seventh, as specifying that words spoken by men, are matters upon which they shall be either accepted or condemned at the last day. *Math.* xii. 36, 37.

Now let any one who has verified these references, point out if he can, any passage in the New Testament that says a man shall be accepted *at the last day* through a profession of faith in Jesus Christ.

is however equally true, that he will henceforth be assisted in his endeavors by the grace of God through the mediation of Jesus Christ, if he avails himself of the privileges that pertain to him as an adopted child of God,—and thus all things shall work together to his ultimate good. But work he must to obtain this salvation, for all depends upon himself as being a faithful and obedient servant of Jehovah, striving to attain to personal righteousness and holiness unto perfection.

I have yet to speak of the sins of truly devout and regenerated christians after their adoption; for as their condition as free agents undergoing probation is unchanged notwithstanding their privileges, they are still liable to offend against their Creator; but as this subject seems more properly to belong to the ensuing section, we shall postpone its present consideration.

ON ADOPTION INTO THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD.

The third subject of that compend of christian doctrine laid before our readers at page 57, was as follows:

“In addition to the mere fact that persons truly penitent are thus justified, or in other words have their sins forgiven them for Jesus Christ’s sake, they are furthermore, on that account, adopted as children into the family or household of Jehovah, and as such receive from him spiritual influences by which they not only discern their duties with greater distinctness, but they are thus assisted in doing what has been required of them as free agents, in accomplishing their perfection under the appointments of Jehovah.”

As this doctrine involves the consideration of two particulars, first, that of adoption into the household of God, and secondly, the communication to them of spiritual influences, it will be necessary to speak of these different subjects under their respective heads. We shall therefore in the first place treat of Christian Adoption.

Whatever may have been the mode by which our Saviour accomplished the purposes for which he came upon earth, all was fulfilled by him to Jehovah’s entire approbation, and the result was the annunciation of a most gracious dispensation to mankind through the instrumentality of Jesus Christ, upon a principle perfectly intelligible to us, and which distinctly furnishes us with an intellectual foundation for the regulation of all christian action. This principle is nothing less than that Jehovah has condescended not only to place himself in the position of a Father to all persons who will seek him through Jesus Christ, but that he actually looks

upon them as being his *children*. Consequently this is the distinctly speculative, as it is also the practical point of view in which Jehovah is to be regarded by all truly devout christians, who seek their salvation from him through Jesus Christ.

Under the appointments of the Mosaic Economy, as we have shown at Vol. I. 429, the Jews regulated their moral action according to a *code of laws*, by which they were instructed in particulars both as to what they should do and what they should not do; and provision for their infirmity of obedience was made in sacrifices, ceremonies, and priestly administrations. Or as Paul has observed, (*Gal. iv. 1—3,*) they were treated as children under age, who are required to act according to positive instructions given by parents or guardians. Little therefore was required from the Jews according to their own perceptions as to what was just and right in the nature of things, they were simply to regulate their moral conduct by a strict observance of the laws of Moses.

But in the coming of our Saviour, a change in the principle regulating human responsibility was promulgated. Jesus Christ in laying the foundation of the "kingdom of heaven," as the Messiah, was expressly declared of Jehovah to be "*the Son of God, with power,*" (*i. e.*) that he had power as a son, in the house or kingdom of *his Father*; like a dutiful son on earth living with an indulgent father, has power in his father's house to act as if the house was his own. By this right as a son, Jesus Christ has power to extend to all his faithful followers the privileges of God's house or heavenly kingdom, so that they shall virtually become through the grace of Jehovah, participators and co-heirs with Christ in its future blessedness.

The Jews on a certain occasion, (*John viii. 33, &c.*) told our Saviour, "We be Abraham's seed and were never in bondage (spiritually) to any man; how sayest thou (then) we shall be made free." To this Christ must be supposed to have replied, though omitted by the evangelist, that whatever were their privileges through Abraham, yet as he was but a servant in the house or family of Jehovah, so their privilege through him was nothing as compared to that conferred by the "*Son of God.*" This our Saviour must be supposed to have argued, for he afterwards says, "the servant abideth not in the house forever, but the son abideth ever. If the son therefore make you free, (*i. e.* of his father's house,) ye shall be free indeed."

This doctrine is very clearly recognized in the writings of the apostles, for in numerous places, they distinctly speak of *the adoption*

tion which all true christians receive of Jehovah as being his children through faith in Jesus Christ. Thus in *Romans* viii. 14, &c. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God they are *the sons of God*. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of *adoption* whereby we cry Abba, (*i. e.* Father, a word not used by servants, but by children only.) And if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him," &c. The same doctrine is laid down in *Galatians* iv. 4, &c. "But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive *the adoption of sons*. And because *ye are sons*, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts crying Abba, (*i. e. Father.*) Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son, and if a son then an heir of God through Christ." (See also *John* i. 12; *Ephes.* ii. 19; *1 John* iii. 1, 2. .

If men therefore renounce their evil courses of life and come to God through faith in Jesus Christ, *i. e.* confiding in the promises made by him that they would be thus accepted of Jehovah, they are then adopted into the family of God through the rite of baptism, by which they bind themselves to observe religiously all that Christ has required of them.

Being thus made the sons of God by *adoption*, they then enjoy the privileges of sons, they are no longer like children under age, or as menials under any formal law or code of precepts, but they are like grown up children, men or women, left to regulate their moral conduct by what *they know to be acceptable in their Father's sight*. The principle by which they are to exercise themselves in this particular, is, by living a holy life, striving after perfection, and discharging every duty to their fellow men according to the perfect rule of Christ; "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also unto them." The comprehensive nature of which requirement we have already insisted on, Vol. II. 15, &c.

In virtue of this adoption of believers in Jesus Christ, as sons or children of God, it is abundantly evident why Jehovah under the Christian Economy, dispensed with all the formal requirements moral or ceremonial of the Jewish dispensation. Such things might be required from mere children without knowledge, or from servants who are not influenced by motives of love. But from adult children, as sons or daughters, the principle of love alone was supposed to be a sufficient inducement for right conduct. If a man from a principle of filial love should strive diligently to do

what his Maker required of him towards accomplishing intellectual and moral perfection, every thing that could be required from human free agency would be fulfilled under this simple motive.

It was in consistency with this principle that Jehovah is *our father and we his children*, that the apostle Paul so frequently insists upon christian liberty in being delivered from the bondage of the law; *i. e.* the observance of mere rites, ceremonies, external institutions, or priestly intervention. *Ye are the children of God* according to the apostle, and as such can at all times call upon him as *your Father*. All formalities of seeking his favor by any outward modes, were plainly inconsistent with such an affectionate relationship.* Christians had nothing else to do than live a godly, sober, and righteous life before their Father, whether as concerned their personal discipline, or their duties towards their fellow men. If they should transgress through infirmity in any of these particulars, or if they required any favor or grace from their Father, they had only to ask what they desired from him directly by prayer, for Jesus Christ's sake. For Jehovah as a father being universally present to every one who seeks him, so all that would avail themselves of the privilege, would be heard and answered of God, their heavenly father, as children upon earth are answered by their earthly fathers.

This very remarkable and affectionate relation of Jehovah to mankind, as a father to all who will seek him through Jesus Christ, it is of the utmost importance we should appreciate distinctly, for it is the absolute principle upon which the Christian Dispensation has been constituted, whether as regards the position that Jehovah has condescended to assume, or that by which we are to estimate our position before him. Under this intelligible theory we are enabled to understand with all distinctness every particular that belongs to the external economy of Christianity, which from the oversight of theologians in not fully estimating this relation of father and children, has been the evident cause why so many unjustifiable observances have been introduced into Christianity, through injudicious attempts to sustain by ecclesiastical institutions, sacraments, &c. what they considered was radically defective in human nature, and as such requiring special assistance from God. But nothing can be greater than the privileges already accorded by Jehovah to *his adopted children*, when he promised to hear and

* Nothing can be more forcible than Paul's reasoning on this subject as stated throughout his Epistle to the Galatians. The points of his reasoning however are more especially discussed in chaps. iii. 24—29; iv. 1—7, 9—11; v. 1—6, 13—25.

answer their prayers as individuals. This fact is so evident that it is wholly unnecessary to enlarge upon it; for if Jehovah hears and answers the prayers of every individual, what more can they possibly expect to obtain from him, or how can he become more propitious to their infirmities.

Great however as the privilege is that every devout christian enjoys before Jehovah as an *adopted son*, yet no one must presume upon it, for he is still in a probationary state, he still has to strive after intellectual and moral perfection; he is still exposed to all the temptations and trials of life, and no dereliction of duty will be overlooked to him on account of his adoption. Indeed the language of the apostles seems to imply a moral impossibility that such persons can sin. (*1 John* iii. 6, 9; *Rom.* vi. 1, 2.) These observations however only mean, that no really sincere christian can sin deliberately on any known matter of duty. On the subject of any transgression committed under the knowledge that they are direct breaches of Jehovah's requirements, I think the inference of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, chap. x. 26—28, to be perfectly conclusive. "If we sin," says he, "wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, (*i. e.* after our conversion to Christ) there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries." The reason of this is evident. If a converted christian sins deliberately against a known commandment of God, he thus expressly renounces his covenant with God and the privileges of his adoption. He treats them with an open contempt, and as such therefore cannot again anticipate forgiveness from Jehovah. The majesty of the Creator of all things cannot be thus offended, and the transgressor be then forgiven. Hence the forcible argument, (*Heb.* x. 28, 29,) "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment suppose ye shall he be thought worthy, who" (by a wilful and deliberate transgression, virtually,) "hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath accounted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, (*i. e.* a matter of no importance) and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace."

But though no converted man it is supposed by the apostles, can sin deliberately and wilfully, or if he does so, that he then renounces all future salvation,* yet the apostles undoubtedly recog-

* It may be asked however, whether such person may not ultimately repent and his sin be forgiven. I will not undertake to put any limitation to the grace of God by saying it is impossible, but at the same time I see nothing to justify its

nize the possibility of truly devout and sincere christians sinning through infirmity. Such persons may be surprised through the suddenness of temptation, or through some self-delusion, or in any manner that does not distinctly recognize a wilful and deliberate violation of God's known requirements.—*Gal. vi. 1, 2; 1 John i. 8, 9; ii. 1.*

When persons who have thus sinned through infirmity, again come to the possession of an unclouded mind, they then are aware of the sinfulness of their conduct, and though not deliberate sinners, they nevertheless can plead no extenuation for their transgression beyond their mere infirmity, which the Scripture never recognizes to be a sufficient excuse. Such offenders therefore must humble themselves before God with all sorrow and penitence, redress the consequences of their disobedience as far as possible, firmly resolve to sin no more in a similar manner, and beseech God to forgive them for Christ's sake. If all these conditions be faithfully complied with, their sin will be forgiven them, and they be restored to their former privileges.

There is another class of sins to which truly converted christians are liable that is more difficult to dispose of. These are those insensible departures from Jehovah's appointments, whether concerning matters of faith, institution, or obedience, which gradually lead them away from the simplicity of God's revelations into systems of human will-worship. Such conduct is said in Scripture to grieve the spirit of God, and he gradually abandons such persons to their own perverseness and folly. How far they shall afterwards be judged for their irrational conduct, we are not informed in the Scriptures, and therefore I shall not undertake to speculate on the subject.

Having said all that is deemed necessary upon the subject of christian adoption into the household or family of God, we shall now take up the consideration of the second part of the doctrine stated at page 85, *viz.* concerning those spiritual influences that Jehovah has promised to communicate to those who seek him.

possibility. If the great end of human existence is that mankind as intellectual and moral free agents are to accomplish a perfection in righteousness and holiness through their own personal exertions, how can we presume that Jehovah would recognize the principle, that a converted man in immediate covenant with him, could ever be permitted to suspend his moral action for a time under any particular temptation, and to indulge wilfully and deliberately in known sin. Such a principle as this would nullify the whole practical scheme of Christianity whenever a man might see fit to gratify himself however contrary it might be to righteousness or holiness.

ON THE INFLUENCES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

There is nothing more expressly taught in the Scripture, than that Jehovah imparts to the minds and consciences of those who seek his favor in the mode that he has appointed, a certain amount of spiritual influence, by which as a new principle of intellectual and moral life, men are enabled to attain to a perfection of nature or being that they could not have accomplished without such assistance. In what manner this spirit of Jehovah operates on the human soul we may be unable to explain, but we contend for its truth as a matter of fact, which as to its possibility there is no difficulty in comprehending.

But to understand this subject consistently with what the Scriptures have communicated concerning it, we must first estimate the constitution of human nature in what we denominate its natural state, for it is upon this natural state that spiritual influences are superinduced.

By the natural state of man, we mean that peculiar constitution of being, under which, by the appointment of our Creator, every individual produced into the world is competent for a certain development through his own unassisted intellectual and moral powers. This natural organization of man, as we have termed it, is in its every part from Jehovah, for he alone made us, he alone has constituted us as we are, and consequently whatever powers we are capable of exerting are derived alone from his appointment. Our natural state therefore implies nothing else than the merely natural exhibition of those physical, moral, and intellectual powers, which Jehovah has bestowed upon us in order to qualify us as *free agents*, this being the very purpose for which we have received this peculiar organization.

Under this natural constitution of being, all men as individuals are born, and as such exhibit those physical, moral, or intellectual phenomena, that characterizes human nature according to the constitutions of the individuals themselves, and that social condition of the community in which they have their opportunity for development. Thus some are brutal savages scarcely excelling the beasts around them, because they have no opportunity for a superior development. Others born in highly civilized communities possess superior advantages, and may in consequence of their mere position attain to the most perfect development of their mere natural organization, which is very different in different individuals.

But though certain persons may have thus attained to the highest point of excellence that mere human nature has ever accomplished, yet for all this, they may in the Scripture sense of the term be mere natural men, either wholly ignorant of, or wholly alienated from God. The opposite state to such a condition, is the spiritual man, *i. e.* those who having been enlightened and assisted by the spirit of God, are in consequence so entirely changed from their previous condition as natural men, that they are represented in the figurative language of the Scripture writers as having been regenerated, or born again, *i. e.* as having become new creatures in comparison to what they were in their former natural state.

Whether the spirit of Jehovah operates directly upon mankind at large in their natural state, is a question strictly speaking that does not belong to an exposition of our present subject, but as this doctrine has been assumed by the Society of Friends as an undoubted truth, and has thus a direct action upon their theory of Christianity, it is perhaps proper we should take some notice of the subject in its supposed universality. As the Friends distinctly recognize the principle of human depravity through the consequence of Adam's transgression, (*Barclay's Apology, Prop. iv.*) their doctrine of the divine light, "which lighteneth every man that cometh into the world," (*John i. 9.*) is nothing else than the universal extension of that doctrine of *preventing grace*, by which the theological assumption concerning original sin, is neutralized in order to make mankind *more theologico*, responsible creatures before their Creator. The Friends however, carry out this doctrine of *an internal light* so far, that they make it the fundamental principle of religious action with all persons, at all times, and upon all occasions, and hence they regard the Scripture to be little else than a record of experiences developed under that light. They admit it is true that the revelations of the Scripture are always consistent with their own perceptions of *the light*, but not as restricting them in their views of christian doctrine, since they hold that all truly devout persons are at all times guided by the heavenly light to a distinct perception of all things essential to salvation.*

As this doctrine of the Friends is only an exaggeration of the doctrine of preventing grace, the fallacious assumption of which I have shown at Vol. I. 313, &c. I shall say nothing farther on the subject. All that we shall correct is the English translation of the Scripture as quoted by the Friends. Instead of "*that* is the true

* This matter is distinctly assumed by Barclay in his third proposition "Concerning the Scriptures."

light," &c. it ought to have been rendered "*He*" (*i. e.* Christ) "is the true light that coming into the world lightenereth," (or will lighten) "every man," (*i. e.* provided they seek him.) The verse in question is not a universal proposition bearing upon all the descendants of Adam, but only upon those who may be born into the world since Christ came, and then only so far as he may be sought after by those to whom he has been preached, as is expressly stated in the 12th verse.*

Jehovah made mankind intellectual creatures who were to accomplish holiness or righteousness unto perfection through their own voluntary action, and as this doctrine originally revealed to them of God, has never been wholly lost sight of in all the corruptions of the Patriarchal Dispensation, so we have no doubt that in all ages of the world, there have been men who in having retained through tradition this fundamental principle of all religion, have sought assistance from God that they might be enabled to become virtuous or righteous, and so far we may presume their honest prayer was heard, and that they were assisted by the spirit of God in becoming what they esteemed to be virtuous and excellent. Further than this we can see nothing to be reasonably inferred concerning the general operations of the spirit, and most assuredly we have no knowledge of any changes having occurred among the heathen, that approximate towards the peculiarities of the Jewish or Christian Dispensations, until after they had been instructed by the hearing or reading of the Scripture. Nay, even when the gospel is preached to the heathen, there is little readiness manifested among them to receive it. On the contrary it is with the utmost difficulty our missionaries are able to make even a genuine convert. Every thing therefore, justifies us to believe that Jehovah does not prevent the heathen with his grace, or incline their hearts to the reception of truth by any direct operation of his spirit, otherwise the indications of his spiritual agencies would be manifested by their readiness to be converted.†

* The observation made by Paul, (*Rom. xii. 3; 1 Cor. xii. 7,*) that "there is a manifestation of the Spirit given to every man to profit withal," does not regard mankind in general, but is applicable to those only who had spiritual or supernatural gifts, and concerning whom the apostle was exclusively speaking, as the whole context of the chapter sufficiently shews. To make a universal proposition out of this partial statement is as unreasonable a matter as any thing ever done by theology.

† I have not space to give any detailed proofs as to this matter. I shall therefore merely refer to the statement made by the Moravian missionaries, who inform us, (*Pritchard Res. Hist. Man.* i. 192,) that they preached the gospel to the Greenlanders fifteen years before they made a convert. The missionary journal of

But however ignorant we may be on the general subject of spiritual influences, there is no obscurity on it as specially promised to those who honestly embrace the doctrines of Christianity, for the Scriptures distinctly teach us that if men will ask from God the influences of his spirit according to the mode that he has appointed, he has promised to bestow it upon them, and thus assist them onward to their spiritual perfection.

This subject however, at first sight, is apparently involved with great perplexities in consequence of the very different notions, doctrines, and practices, that prevail among professing christians ; of whose sincerity and piety it is impossible to doubt, however much we may wonder at the peculiarities of their religious creeds. Hence comes the difficulty how men sincerely devout, and desirous of conforming to the requirements of their Creator, and who pray to him for spiritual guidance, should nevertheless at the same time manifest such striking differences in doctrines, rites, and practices. If Jehovah bestows the influences of his holy spirit upon all those who devoutly seek it from him, how can this happen.

This apparent difficulty however I apprehend may be easily explained. The perplexity arises from the circumstance, that christians too generally have departed from the simplicity of the divine economy of Jehovah as announced to them in the New Testament, and have amalgamated with the system as appointed by him, a variety of presumptuous doctrines, institutions, and practices of human invention, concerning which we have no right whatever to anticipate any illumination from God. Mankind therefore differ among themselves on such subjects, and will continue to differ, though at the same time Jehovah under his own institutions and according to his promise, does communicate spiritual influences to them as far as his scheme extends, provided men devoutly seek them in the way that he has appointed.

We have repeatedly stated to our readers, that Jehovah's purpose with mankind as far as revealed in the Scripture, is, that they, as free agents of a limited capacity, shall accomplish through their own voluntary agencies a perfection in righteousness, whether of

Tyerman and Bennet is to the same effect. It was fifteen years before a christian convert was made in Tahiti. (Vol. ii. 183, 242) And they state in vol. iii. 46, that it is doubtful whether any abiding religious impression had been made in the island of Java on the heart of a Chinese or Mahomedan, though the gospel had been preached to them for many years.

These circumstances can be easily explained on natural principles, but they are inexplicable if conversion is effected by the direct operation of the spirit of God.

thought, word, or deed. This is the established purpose of Jehovah with all generations of men, and every portion of Christianity is subordinate or accessory to that end.

But theologians, not satisfied with the simplicity of the teaching of the Scriptures in their practical requirements of faith or obedience, have attempted to penetrate into the unrevealed councils of Jehovah, and by subtle inferences have undertaken to reduce them into systems, which they have then expounded to mankind as truths essential to Christianity. Is Jehovah therefore to illuminate the minds of religious persons by a supernatural instruction, concerning the truth or falsehood of the various speculations which have been thus originated by presumptuous theologians? The absurdity of the question is its sufficient reply.

What the Scriptures have communicated to us of Jehovah's purposes, or of human obligations as far as concerns us in our sphere of action, are sufficiently distinct. Beyond this we have no information, because such knowledge is not essential to mankind as fulfilling Jehovah's special object in their creation. Nor are we without instruction from the Scripture writings as reproofing that presumptuous curiosity that so continually prompts men to penetrate into the councils of the Almighty. Thus Moses told the Jews that their duty lay in obedience not in speculation, when he observed, (*Deut. xxix. 29,*) "Secret things belong unto Jehovah our God, but those things which are revealed, belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law." When our Saviour was asked (*Luke xiii. 23, 24,*) if there be many that are saved, he did not satisfy the enquirers, but told them "strive ye to enter into the narrow gate," &c. When the disciples asked him who should be greatest in the kingdom of heaven, (*Math. xviii. 1—4,*) he replied that unless they became converted and like little children, they should not even enter into that kingdom. When he was asked after his resurrection, (*Acts i. 7,*) whether he would now restore the kingdom of the Jews, he plainly told them it was no concern of theirs to know what pertained to Jehovah's purposes. When Peter asked him (*John xxi. 21, 22,*) what should be the end of the apostle John, our Saviour replied "what is that to thee, follow thou me."

If men therefore will recognize as part of their religion, any presumptuous doctrines concerning matters that have not been required from them by their Creator, they will receive no spiritual light on such subjects, but may through their presumption become inextricably entangled in their speculations until they are gradually

led aside into all the infatuations of will-worship. But if they restrict themselves to what Jehovah has required of them under the dispensation made known through Jesus Christ, whether in matters of doctrine or practice; then the influences of his Holy Spirit will be communicated to them by enlightening their minds to such a degree, that they shall through this means be fully enabled to accomplish the purposes of their creation. And here is that common ground, upon which all truly devout and simple minded christians of every denomination have ever been found to stand in all past generations of men, notwithstanding the peculiarities of the various creeds under which they might be classed according to external appearances. The root and substance of true Christianity was in their lives, practice, and simplicity of their faith.* Their various theological speculations were essentially disregarded by them, and they alike received spiritual influences from Jehovah according to the simplicity of their faith, as addressed to him through the mediation of Jesus Christ, and thus they continually advanced towards that perfection of righteousness required of them by their Creator.

The only course therefore, by which any individual may expect to receive the promised assistance of the Holy Spirit, is by restricting himself implicitly to the positive requirements of Jehovah, whether in the conduct of his life, or in adopting the modes through which God's grace has been alone promised to those who diligently seek after their salvation. These particulars however, whether of faith or practice can only be ascertained by an honest examination of the Scriptures, and since all christians without exception recognize these writings to exhibit the scheme and foundation of the christian faith as a revelation from the Creator of all things, so nothing can be more preposterously absurd than the conduct of

*The following observations of Mr. Wesley, (*Ser. on Ephes. ii. 12,*) I apprehend fully sustains my views on this subject. "There are some well meaning persons who have averred that whatever change is wrought in men, whether in their hearts or lives, yet if they have not clear views of those capital doctrines, the fall of man, justification by faith, and the atonement made by the death of Christ, and of his righteousness transferred to them, they can have no benefit from his death. *I dare in no wise affirm this. Indeed I do not believe it.* I believe the merciful God regards the lives and tempers of men more than their ideas. I believe he respects the goodness of the heart, rather than the clearness of the head; and that if the heart of man be filled (by the grace of God and the power of his Spirit) with the humble, gentle, patient love of God and man, God will not cast him into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels, because his ideas are not clear, or because his conceptions are confused. Without holiness I own no man shall see the Lord; but I dare not add or clear ideas."

those who do not thoroughly investigate what Jehovah has expressly required from mankind, concerning those particulars that do pertain to their salvation.

But however clear the rationality of such an examination of the Scripture writings may be, yet it is not commonly followed. The convert to Christianity ordinarily applies for instruction concerning the truths supposed to be taught in the Scriptures, to some religious friend or clergyman, who save him the trouble of investigating them for himself by teaching him the peculiar tenets of their sect, or by putting into his hand some digest of them, in which references are made to the Scriptures as sustaining what they consider to be the fundamental principles of Christianity. If the convert be a little scrupulous, he may possibly undertake to verify the references made, by an examination of the Scripture, and then finding them as literally quoted, without regard to the circumstances under which they were originally enunciated, or without any suspicion of the correctness of the interpretation given, and without any knowledge of the import of other conflicting texts, he then implicitly adopts this sectarian compilation as being an undoubted exposition of Jehovah's truth.

Now as this is the course ordinarily pursued by persons converted to Christianity, we need not wonder why they advocate different systems, neither can we be at any loss in perceiving why such conduct should be unaccompanied by those spiritual influences that Jehovah has promised to bestow upon those who shall conform to his requirements. If a man therefore, prays to God for spiritual assistance, and at the same time does not thoroughly investigate the express revelation of Jehovah, but takes his faith at second hand from a human digest which has been elaborated he knows not when or how, is it any wonder that such a person ever continues under a false estimate of the truths of Christianity. I do not doubt but that pious persons often resist the illuminating influences of Jehovah's spirit concerning the import of the revelations made in the Scripture writings, as if they were assailed by the suggestions of Satan, and who then in all the earnestness of their prejudices pray to God, not that they may be enabled to discern the truth, but that their faith may not fail, *i. e.* that their reliance upon their sectarian doctrines and opinions may not be shaken. Now if their sectarian views be inconsistent with what has been taught in the Scriptures, what can be more absurd than for the individual to suppose that Jehovah will miraculously convince him of errors

and mistakes, against his own exertions not to be convinced.* As the Scriptures are from God, the truth must be contained in them, whereas we can have no assurance that it is exhibited in any human exposition, because these abstracts differ widely in particulars from each other, and no one can possibly say which is right, even to his own intellectual belief, until he has tested them as to their full accordance with the written word of God.

The course then of every rational christian is abundantly clear, but if mankind will not conform to the requirements of Jehovah as exhibited in his revelation, he leaves them to themselves as we have shown to have been the case in the Patriarchal and Jewish Dispensations, and then the consequences are false doctrines, false practices, will-worship, and fanaticism.

* We have a very striking illustration of this matter in an anecdote told by Louis IX. king of France. (*Mem. of Joinville*, 359.) "A bishop of Paris whose christian name was William, informed him that a *very learned man in sacred theology* once came to consult him, and that when he opened his case he wept most bitterly. The bishop said to him, master, do not thus lament and bewail, for there cannot be any sinner however enormous but that God has the power to pardon. Ah, replied the learned man, know my lord bishop, that I cannot do any thing but weep, for I am much afraid that in one point I am an unbeliever, *in not being well assured with respect to the holy sacrament that is placed on the altar, according to what the holy church teaches and commands to be believed,*" (i. e. the doctrine of transubstantiation.) "This is what my mind cannot receive, and I believe, added he, that it is caused by the temptation of the enemy, (i. e. the devil.)

"Master, answered the bishop, now tell me, when the enemy, (the devil,) thus tempts you, or leads you into this error, is it pleasing to you? Not at all, said he, *on the contrary, it is very disgusting, and displeases me more than I can tell you.*

"Well I ask you again said the bishop, if ever you accepted of money or worldly goods to deny with your mouth the *holy sacrament on the altar*, (transubstantiation,) or the other sacraments of the church? You may be truly assured, answered the learned man, that I have never accepted money or worldly goods for such purposes, and that *I would rather have my limbs cut off, one by one, while I was alive, than in any way to deny the sacraments.*"

The bishop then assured this learned man, that by this invincible determination to hold on to his allegiance to the church in what she taught, that he actually had more merit with God, than if he was not tempted to renounce the doctrines she (the church) maintained. This he sustained by an illustration which it is not necessary to extract, but the end was, according to Joinville, that "the learned man threw himself on his knees before the bishop, and felt his mind much at ease, and was well contented with the bishop's comfortable advice."

Here then is a statement that no Protestant can misunderstand. A learned man was brought to a discernment of the absurdity of transubstantiation, and yet instead of following out the subject by a studious examination of the Scripture, he chooses to regard his mental illumination as the temptation of Satan, and consequently effectually resisted his better instruction. Now was the Almighty to overpower this man's stubborn determination by a miraculous interposition? And if God does not do so for Catholics, does he act differently with Protestants?

As far as I can comprehend the phenomena of spiritual influence as exhibited in the universal history of mankind, I cannot discern that the spirit of Jehovah acts upon an honest sincere christian but by imparting clearer *intellectual perceptions* of religious duty or privilege. By such assistance the individual discerns with greater distinctness, the dangerous consequences of a sinful life, the necessity of amendment, the importance of righteousness and holiness, as being the only means by which men can become the heirs of a blessed immortality. Further than this the Spirit of God apparently cannot act without destroying human free agency, for if knowledge of divine things is communicated by inspiration, and spiritual strength also imparted to do what was thus suggested by the Spirit of God, surely God does all for mankind, and their moral and intellectual responsibilities are downright unmeaning terms. Jehovah therefore, as is evident from the doctrinal differences of christians among themselves, communicates no positive knowledge nor information to them whether on matters of faith or practice. These it is every man's duty to acquire for himself by an honest examination of the word of God, and if he will but exercise himself rightly on the subject, we may not doubt but that Jehovah, by his co-operating influences, will enlighten such an individual to the discernment of truth as far as it is essential to christian perfection.

That the spirit of Jehovah does not act upon mankind impulsively, as leading them to a supernatural discernment of christian truth, is demonstrable from all previous history. Thus Luther and others who commenced the great work of the Reformation, and whom we Protestants generally regard as instruments in the hand of God for the deliverance of our religious conscience from Papal despotism, yet they nevertheless had no manifestation of the spirit to guide them into all truth. For instance, Luther maintained the doctrine of consubstantiation with the utmost heat of his ardent temperament, while at the same time, Zuinglius in the mountains of Switzerland announced another doctrine on the subject. Or suppose that some persons may contend that Luther's doctrine was correct, what difference will it make, for Zuinglius was as honest and pious as Luther. How comes it that the spirit of God did not lead him to embrace Luther's doctrine?

But we have a more familiar instance of the non-operation of the spirit of Jehovah in leading men into true doctrinal opinions, in the remarkable difference between Wesley and Whitfield. Never were there two men of more devoted piety and zeal for

their master's service, or of a more christian benevolence of heart towards the souls of their fellow men. Never were there two men who prayed more earnestly to be guided by the spirit of God; and yet these two had to separate from each other in their gospel ministry; for while the one preached that God offered salvation to all men without distinction, the other advocated the utterly inconsistent doctrine of election, that fundamentally contradicts the whole scope and tenor of the gospel. Can any one then contend that the influences of the spirit are given to those that seek them, so that they shall be led to the knowledge of all doctrinal truths? Certainly not on speculations of human invention. But the spirit doubtless was given to both Wesley and Whitfield, as constituting them faithful agents in accomplishing Jehovah's work and purposes by calling men to repentance and righteous lives; but the spirit did not enlighten them on the subject of their doctrinal speculations, for if it had, these two most assuredly would have been brought to one common belief.

Without adducing further instances of individuals, we may appeal to the history of all the Dispensations of Jehovah to mankind as establishing the same fact. There was a time when the truth as announced by God was perfect in human apprehension, whether under the Patriarchal, Jewish, or Christian Dispensations, and men sincerely believing in those truths never did desire but that they might remain steadfast in their religious profession. Yet they nevertheless gradually became more and more corrupt, until they departed entirely from the requirements of Jehovah; not because he was wanting to them in his promises of spiritual assistance, but because they did not seek him aright.* But if Jehovah acts by preventing grace as influencing the human soul and leading it to right opinions and conduct, such a state of things could not have taken place.

I cannot therefore discern in the past history of religious individuals any effects that follow the secret influences of the spirit of Jehovah, beyond its *first*, increasing our intellectual capacity to

*This principle is distinctly stated by Paul in 2 Tim. iii. 7, 8, &c. where in predicting the future departure of christians from the simplicity of the truth, he also mentions them as "ever learning," (i. e. employed as if learning) "and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." The reason of which is stated in the eighth verse that they "resisted the truth, as being men of corrupt minds, *void of judgment* concerning the faith," i. e. of what were the requirements of christian doctrine.

Our translation obscures the meaning of the apostle's reasoning by the use of the word "*reprobate*." See on this word our first note, Vol. I. 382.

discern the import of revealed truth, and which according to the pains we take to ascertain it, will be sooner or later distinctly appreciated as far as it bears upon our faith and practice. But if men instead of diligently exerting themselves to comprehend what is required by God, as addressed to them as intellectual and moral free agents, will absurdly adopt, as divine truths, the inventions or speculations of men, it is utterly unreasonable to expect that the Spirit of God will miraculously correct the abuse of their intellectual powers. In the *second place* the influences of the Spirit of God as enlightening our understanding, thus assist our moral determination to do what we know to be right, or to abstain from what we know to be wrong, as required by his revelations in the Scripture; and hence by this means mankind are enabled to do what they could not otherwise have accomplished. At the same time however it must be remarked, that this supernatural increase of discernment does not interfere with human free agency, nor does it extend the standard of human capacity by enabling a man to act the part of a being superior to man. The most perfect christian is still a man undergoing probation or discipline, and *as long as life lasts*, he must be found under all those peculiarities that characterize the imperfection of human nature, as appointed to undergo trials of every kind suitable to such a creature.* Hence Jehovah did not cure Moses of his stammering speech, nor could Paul obtain a deliverance from the "*thorn in his flesh*," be that what it may,

* But though every devout man has to struggle against the temptations, afflictions, and trials of this world, as long as life may last, yet he may be at perfect peace so far as concerns his condition before God, under the full assurance of eternal blessedness hereafter. But by assurance I mean only the testimony of a man's own conscience, or as stated by Dr. South: (*Ser. on Prov. x. 9.*) "Assurance is that persuasion or confidence which a man takes up of the pardon of his sins and his interest in God's favor, upon such grounds and terms as the Scripture lays down. But now since the Scripture promises eternal happiness and pardon of his sin *upon the sole condition of faith and sincere obedience*, it is evident that he only can plead a title to such a pardon, *whose conscience impartially tells him he has performed the required conditions.*"

"If the laws of God," says Tillotson, (*Ser. on John iii. 10.*) "be plain and open to every man's understanding, then it is as easy for every man to know when he obeys God and keeps his commandments, as when he obeys the commands of his father or his prince, or when he keeps the known laws of the land. And no rational or considerate man ever had any doubt of this kind," &c. In like manner, "what can a man know concerning himself if not the reality of his own intentions? If a man should in earnest tell me that he doubted very much whether he had that friendship for me which he made profession of, and that he was afraid that his affection for me was not real and sincere, I confess I should doubt of it too; because I should certainly conclude that no man could know that matter so well as he himself."

however earnestly he desired it, because a deliverance would have effected a change in his physical or moral organization by which his whole personality would have been changed. He would have been no longer Paul, but another man as wanting his peculiar idiosyncrasy; Christ however promised him grace to assist him towards fulfilling his probation, but not to relieve him from his peculiar responsibility in that particular. The same fact is exhibited in the history of every christian; the influences of Jehovah's Spirit never changes the constitutional temperament of any individual. Whatever may be the peculiarities of the natural man, they still characterize him after his regeneration. The change effected is only the sanctification of his will, or intellectual determination, by which his action previously involved in evil or unholy purposes, is henceforth directed only towards things that are good or righteous.

The due estimate of this undeniable fact is of the utmost importance in estimating the operations of the Holy Spirit, for by a reference to the principle that men are not changed in their actual natures, but are only sanctified in their objects and purposes, we shall find the solution of all those anomalies of religious conduct that have appeared among the professors of Christianity, and which are wholly inexplicable according to the ordinary notions that prevail with men concerning the subject of spiritual influences.

Mankind, as must be abundantly familiar to every one of the least observation, are born into the world of all varieties of bodily temperament, intellectual capacity, and moral sensibility. To enumerate the modifications of human nature as resulting from the combination of these peculiarities in their different degrees of intensity would be impossible. It will be sufficient to mention some of those more eminently characteristic of the individual. Some men are naturally ardent, daring, regardless of consequences; others are timid, and shrink back from every responsibility. Others are clear-headed, judicious, and prudent; while others have only confused and indistinct apprehensions of the nature of things, and consequently are injudicious, and imprudent. Some again are cold and phlegmatic, almost incapable of excitement, while others are of the most sensitive temperament, eagerly laying hold of any thing that interests them with a zeal and enthusiasm that is sometimes carried out to the utmost practical absurdity. Some men again are of an austere ascetic disposition, while others are joyous and prone to self-indulgence.

It would be still more difficult to enumerate these diversities of personal character as further affected by the accidents of learning or ignorance, wealth or poverty, a prominent or humble position in society.

But whatever may be characteristic of constitution or social condition, every sane individual may be brought to the knowledge of his perishing condition as a sinner before Jehovah, and he be thus induced to forsake his evil ways, and strive to live acceptably in the sight of God by a conformity to all that has been required of him. With such a view he professes his belief in Christianity according to the peculiarities of some one of those numerous sects into which Christianity is divided, and he then voluntarily enters on the discharge of all those obligations which he considers to be binding on his conscience. Immediately after this is done, the constitutional and intellectual peculiarities of individuals begin to manifest themselves, some become austere, ascetical, fanatical; the majority are more or less sober and practically religious, while others again exhibit their idiosyncrasy by a flaming enthusiasm that overleaps all the decorum of christian life, and inculcate and practice all varieties of extravagance.

It is easy to see, from this sketch, how Christianity becomes furnished with all sorts of agents, from the bigoted and fanatical inquisitor, who in his harshness of zeal sends those he considers heretics to be burnt alive at the stake, down to those kind-hearted enthusiasts, who devote themselves to every service of philanthropy with the most self-denying privation of every thing pertaining to their personal gratification.* All these phenomena in the religious history of mankind are results of the peculiar physical,

* In making these observations, the reader must understand them in the most universal sense, as applicable to mankind under all the peculiarities of nations, sects, or parties, and at all periods of time. I apprehend there is some particular number of individuals which if collected into groups by mere numerical aggregation, would on the whole furnish a fair average of all the peculiarities of human character as indicated by their mere natural capacities.

If we be permitted to assume that this unknown number may be *one thousand individuals*, then I maintain that the intellectual and moral phenomena exhibited in any one such numerical group, will be the same as those developed in every other group. The apparent differences between them simply arise from the circumstance of their action being modified by the peculiarities of their religious creeds, the nature of their political institutions, and the conventional forms of social intercourse recognized in each particular group. If we make a due allowance for these circumstances, we shall find that the very same feelings and principles of conduct constitute the basis of all human action, however seemingly diversified in the history of nations, parties, or religious sects.

moral, or intellectual constitution of individuals, as operated on by the peculiar notions, doctrines, and opinions, that they regard as means by which mankind are ultimately to find acceptance with their Creator.

But we cannot undertake to make any exposition of the multi-form developments of human nature under all the causes that we have enumerated. We reserve but the single subject of enthusiasm for special consideration, as the one that in our day more particularly causes false notions concerning the actual operations of the Spirit of God.

Enthusiasm is a term derived from the ancient heathen Greek word *εὐθευστασμός*, and primarily signified that divine *aflatus* or influence, which it was supposed the gods at times bestowed upon individual men.

In the modern application of the term enthusiasm, it is as a *universal* incapable of any strict definition; for it may comprehend all objects, occupations, tastes, and dispositions. Politicians, warriors, philosophers, theologians, artists, &c. are all liable to become enthusiasts. Indeed all men, unless in a few exceptions, are more or less so in proportion to their constitutional temperament, their intellectual or moral strength.

The only approximation we therefore can make towards comprehending the sense of the term enthusiasm, is by regarding it as significant of an excited state of feeling, induced by a high estimate whether true or false, concerning the importance or excellence of any object, principle, duty, or privilege.

Fanaticism is merely an aggravated degree of enthusiasm, essentially peculiar to religious persons of a harsh and imperious temperament, who apparently cannot rest without attempting to compel other persons to conform to their peculiar standard of propriety. Hence the object of all persecution is to force mankind to do, or believe, what their oppressors consider to be right.

With respect to the general subject of enthusiasm, we have here no concern. We are only required to speak of it as pertaining to those who make a profession of Christianity. It is sufficient to remark, that as there is a greater or less amount of enthusiasm discernable in every class, state, and condition of human society, it would be very wonderful indeed, if there were not enthusiasts in Christianity, as being the most deeply important subject to which the human mind can be directed.

Nothing can be more unmanageable than religious persons of an enthusiastic temper; honest and sincere in their hearts, and firmly

believing themselves to be enlightened and guided by the Spirit of Jehovah, they throw themselves with all their soul into their proposed work; they despise all obstacles, and are willing to endure all things, even death itself, in the discharge of what they consider to be their duty. If to this moral organization of their personality, there should unfortunately be added fluency of speech, which as Southey has well observed, is "a talent which of all others has the least connection with sound intellect," there is no estimate of the disturbance that may ensue, or of how much actual injury may be done for a season to Christianity itself.

It is of great importance that the sober portion of the christian world should be ever on their guard on this subject, and ready to counteract the first outbreaks of enthusiasm. Of the more important means by which this can be prevented, I know of none so effectual as to correct the ordinary prevailing notions concerning the operations of the Holy Spirit, for undoubted as the fact of such influence is taught in the Scripture, yet as we have previously shewn, nothing is more erroneous than the constructions which men have put upon the subject. It is through these false estimates that christian enthusiasm is developed, and it never can be restrained until the ordinary belief concerning the influences of the Spirit of God are brought down to the standard authorized in the Scripture. Nor can there be any real difficulty in estimating the actual truth of the matter, if men will only regard the past history of Christianity on such particulars, as contrasted with what prophets and apostles have written on the subject.

The only operations of the Spirit that we are authorized by the Scripture to expect from the grace of Jehovah, are those that produce the fruits enumerated by Paul. (*Gal. v. 22, &c.*) "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, (*i. e.* forbearance towards our fellow men,) gentleness, goodness, faith, (*i. e.* unshaken confidence in Jehovah's promises,) meekness, temperance," &c. These are the evidences of the operation of the Spirit, and we have no right to look for them in any other mode of exhibition, than as secretly assisting men who as free agents strive diligently to qualify themselves by righteous conduct to become the inheritors of the everlasting kingdom of heaven.

Many persons however are not satisfied with this limited supply of spiritual influences, they insist that Jehovah has promised those who seek him that he will sustain them by his Spirit, and enable them to go on to a perfection which as represented by them, is altogether inconsistent with his purposes with mankind as creatures

of a limited capacity placed in a probationary state. Jehovah has never required from man more than man is able to accomplish, and hence the ability of man can only be estimated by a perfection consistent with the *imperfection of human nature*, and not by the infinitude of Jehovah's perfection. It is man's duty to aim at the utmost perfection, and after having done all that he can in honesty and sincerity, to then throw himself on the goodness of his Creator as a merciful and gracious Father, in which light Jehovah has been pleased to represent himself to the children of men.

The errors of simple minded christians upon this subject proceed commonly from two causes; *first*, from false notions concerning the operations of the Holy Spirit, derived from injudicious interpretations of Scripture, in which the extraordinary operations of the Spirit in the apostolic times, are confounded with those ordinary operations that prevailed at the same time, and which alone have prevailed ever since. For it must be evident that all christians who were converted by the apostles, were not influenced by extraordinary operations of the Spirit of God, but only those whom he qualified for particular services. With all others the operations of the Spirit were those we term ordinary, and which we have no reason to suppose differed in any respect from those given to men at the present time.

But the greater source of error on this subject proceeds from such persons undertaking to determine the subject from their own limited knowledge and personal feelings which they are incapable of analysing, and therefore instead of referring for a solution of facts or supposed facts to principles of common recognition among all intellectually devout men, they assume an explanation which at the same time that it flatters their own self-estimation, also places them above all necessity of reasoning on the subject beyond their own feelings.

Were such persons acquainted with the past history of mankind they could not fall into such enthusiastic notions, for they would then be aware, that men in all ages among the heathens and the Mahomedans, have laid claim to be under the influence of divine operations, and have acted proportionately to such supposed excitements with equal sincerity. I cannot here undertake to make any detailed exposition of such matters, yet I will put it in the power of my readers who may be unaware of the facts of the case to verify my assertion. As concerns the heathens, the statement of the conduct of the priests of Baal, (1 Kings xviii. 28,) who slashed their flesh with knives, will shew how much in earnest they were

in their delusion. So in like manner with the priests of Bellona, the votaries of Isis, or the Syrian goddess, who not only acted in a similar manner but who even emasculated themselves with their own hands, as may be seen in almost any classical dictionary. The Schamans or priests of the Tartars, are as mystical and extravagant, and submit to as many bodily austerities as ever did the Jewish Theraputæ, or the enthusiastic monks of Christendom. The Soofees of Mahomedanism in Persia are as profound mystics as have ever been seen in christian Europe, and the howling dervishes of Pera, or the whirling dervishes of Scutari, and the self-tormenting faquires of India, alike shew the universal existence of enthusiastic religionists.

Such being the facts of the case, we need not wonder at the fantastic absurdity of the christian monks of Mount Athos, the bloody processions of the Flagellants in the thirteenth century, or the insane conduct of the Anabaptists of Munster. Enthusiasm to a greater or less degree is a dormant principle in human nature, which may be always excited by suitable stimulants whether as addressed to Heathens, Mahomedans, or Christians. Sometimes its influence is circumscribed by local associations, sometimes whole nations are roused up into action as if they had lost all-understanding. Under this amazing enthusiasm the multitudes assembled at the Council of Clermont in the tenth century, undertook the first crusade against the Mahomedans of Syria, to recover the supposititious sepulchre of Jesus Christ. Believing the impulse to be an immediate inspiration from heaven, this great assemblage exclaimed as with one tongue, "It is the will of God," and immediately dedicated themselves to this absurd and ferocious war. All Europe communed with them in spirit, and for two centuries did this insane enthusiasm impel hundreds of thousands of men to renounce their estates, their families, their comforts, to go and die on the battle fields of Palestine.

But in making these remarks I do not address myself to any one who is an enthusiast, I am not so absurd as to undertake to convince such persons that they are in error, who only advance for argument, that they feel and know for themselves what they have felt or experienced. I have only attempted to caution others to be on their guard, and that they do not suffer themselves to be led into any error by the bold enthusiasm of men, who from time to time arise in the world and proclaim what they imagine to be suggested by the Spirit of God. Nor do I by this caution allude only to those who have been enthusiasts on a great scale, I would more espe-

cially warn my readers against those more humble enthusiasts in ordinary life, who excite religious movements among christian societies by agencies that are often wholly inconsistent with the theory and scope of that religion taught in the Scripture, which is essentially based on the calm unexcited intellect that Jehovah has bestowed upon mankind as rational and intelligent creatures. Hence the observation of the apostle, (*1 Cor. xiv. 33, 40,*) "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace; and therefore let all things be done decently," *i. e.* in a decorous manner and with order or propriety.

The supreme importance of being continually sustained by the influences of the Spirit of Jehovah, must be sufficiently evident to every one, even if we considered that mankind had merely to rise from that condition of being which we term the natural state. The difficulties that bear upon a man contending against the infirmities of his organization as exposed to the ordinary trials of life, would of themselves be sufficiently great to induce his utmost exertions to obtain spiritual assistance, to enable him to accomplish purposes in which his everlasting welfare is concerned. But how much more important must this help of Jehovah's spirit be estimated, when we find distinct intimations in Scripture of our being obnoxious to evil influences from spiritual enemies, which operate unseen in the world around us, and whose malice more or less affects us when we are remiss in our efforts towards accomplishing that perfection which Jehovah requires of us as intellectual creatures.

Concerning the mode by which evil spirits may be enabled to intrude themselves into human affairs we have no information. But though this matter be involved in the deepest obscurity, it is not the less necessary that we should be apprised of the fact. When discoursing on the subject of Adam's transgressions, (Vol. I.) we there expressed ourselves as fully as we could to justify the belief, that the angelic race existed in a probationary state, before the creation of mankind, and that the time allotted for their probation not having reached the appointed consummation, those who had fallen from their obedience sought a malicious gratification in attempting to ruin the happiness of mankind, then a new race of intelligent creatures. We also have some distinct intimations in various passages of Scripture, that the consummation of Jehovah's scheme, whether with angels or men, will be at the same time. Until that period arrives, both wicked angels and wicked men have a certain ability to do evil, and it is no more anomalous to the

wisdom and perfection of Jehovah that wicked angels exist and are able to act wickedly towards mankind, than that wicked men have such an ability, which we all know from sad experience to be an undoubted fact.

As to the extent of the influence that evil spirits may be able to exert, we have no reason to suppose they can interfere with human responsibilities unless they find men willing to adopt immoral courses of life, and by which circumstance we are enabled to comprehend the desperate wickedness that individuals have sometimes exhibited in the past history of mankind; for as the merely natural man by the spirit of Jehovah co-operating with his exertions, is able to attain to a state of intellectual and moral perfection far above what the mere natural powers of human nature could ever accomplish, so in like manner Satanic influences co-operating with the immoral determinations of a wicked man, can render him more wicked and depraved than the mere natural man could ever sink to through mere human infirmity.

But whatever may be the extent to which evil spirits are capable of influencing mankind, we are sufficiently instructed that the grace of God is abundantly able to counteract their machinations, and his promise is, that he will never leave or forsake those who put their trust in him. Those therefore that fear God and keep his commandments, have a strong refuge in him, and the consciousness of the existence of spiritual enemies in the world around us, at the same time that it should induce the greatest watchfulness against the least neglect of our duties, ought not to induce any timorous apprehension of their being able to do aught that can interfere with our happiness or peace, so long as we faithfully discharge our duty, and rely implicitly upon the promises of Jehovah as made known to us in Jesus Christ.

The following observations of Dr. Samuel Clarke (*Sermon on our Saviour's Temptation*) bear so distinctly on this subject, that I beg leave to lay them before the reader, "Let no man, says the apostle, (*James i. 13,*) plead as an excuse for his sin, *that God permitted the evil one to tempt him into it.* For God, as he himself cannot be tempted with evil, so neither tempteth he any man, neither doth he permit the devil to tempt any one farther than by laying before him such allurements, *as it is in the person's power, and as it is his duty to resist.* But every man is tempted, and then only effectually and sinfully tempted, '*when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed.*' The enemy of men's salvation can do nothing more but only entice the *covetous* with hopes of *gain*, puff

up the *ambitious* with expectation of *honor*, allure the *voluptuous* with prospects of *pleasure*. Where the mind is not under the power of any of these corrupt affections, the tempter can take no hold and his power is at an end. Resist the devil, says the apostle, (*James* iv. 7,) and he will flee from you, &c. In vain therefore do wicked men hope to extenuate their crimes by alleging that they were tempted of the devil, for the Scripture never mentions it as an excuse but on the contrary as an aggravation of a fault, even when it is of such a nature as may well be supposed to have been suggested by the evil one, and for that reason ought above all things to have been more carefully avoided. Why *has Satan filled thine heart?* said St. Peter to Ananias; (*Acts* v. 3,) by way of more *severe* reproof for his presumption in attempting to deceive the Holy Spirit wherewith God had inspired the apostles," &c.

ON THE FINAL JUDGMENT OF MANKIND.

The last subject of that exposition of the principles of the Christian Dispensation made at page 57, was as follows:

"At the consummation of the period appointed for the probationary condition of mankind, we are informed in the New Testament there shall be a resurrection from the dead of all who have ever lived; when a judgment will be held upon every individual under the scrutiny of the Lord Jesus Christ, who has been appointed of Jehovah to superintend this universal investigation of human conduct. Then every one shall be judged according to his past life, and be either accepted of God as an inheritor of the everlasting kingdom of heaven, or else be rejected by him with an utter condemnation."

Whatever are the true doctrinal or practical requirements of the Christian Dispensation as advocated by men in their peculiar notions of divine truth, they all have a common termination in the consummation of the last day as stated in the preceding paragraph. Hence the judgments of that day may in an especial manner be regarded as the test of the correctness of whatever opinions have been advanced by men concerning the purpose of the Christian Dispensation, whether as respects the appointments of Jehovah, or the agencies of mankind. It is therefore of the greatest importance that we should distinctly recall to our minds whatever Christ or his apostles have stated, as bearing upon the exhibitions to be made manifest at the day of judgment.

As the Scriptures most explicitly inform us, that the final determination of all things relating to the ultimate condition of mankind has been committed to the Lord Jesus Christ, it would be altogether unnecessary to enlarge upon that particular.

That this judgment will be preceded by the universal resurrection of all that have ever lived, is equally clear from the Scripture. Our Saviour has expressly said, (*John* v. 28, 29,) "The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice," (*i. e.* of Jesus Christ,) and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation," (properly of condemnation.) The same statement is made with greater precision of terms in *Revelations* xx. 12, 13, "And I saw the dead small and great stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell, (*hades*, or the grave,) delivered up the dead which are in them: and they were judged every man according to their works."

The general object to be accomplished by this universal resurrection is shewn with sufficient clearness in the preceding quotations, though they do not state the particulars by which mankind shall be either accepted or rejected. But from other passages of Scripture we are instructed that the judgment shall be upon the great principles of righteousness, mercy, benevolence, &c. according to the opportunities men have enjoyed of knowing what was righteous, whether as being from the natural inferences of their understanding, or as made known to them by revelation.

Thus Paul informs us, (*Rom.* ii. 6—16,) that the heathen shall be judged in righteousness according to the moral law recognized among themselves. The same doctrine is also implied in what was observed by our Saviour, (*Math.* x. 15; xi. 22, 24; *Luke* x. 14,) that the judgment (*i. e.* the scrutiny) should be *more tolerable*, (*i. e.* less rigid,) as respects the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, and of Tyre and Sidon, than that which would be held upon the Jews of his own day. It follows therefore, as a necessary consequence, that as the Jews should be subjected to a more rigorous scrutiny than the heathen, so the christian world shall be held responsible for a greater moral perfection than the Jews, as having enjoyed greater intellectual and moral advantages.

The formal principles upon which the christian world shall be judged, are not expressly stated in any annunciation of the Scripture concerning the day of judgment, it being evidently assumed to be universally known as involved in the cardinal institution of the gospel, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and mind and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself," principles which we have already shewn, Vol. II. 15, &c. to comprehend all possible moral action on the part of mankind, and concerning which no honest man can ever mistake as to their practical operation. Particular acts of morality however, are incidently mentioned in various passages of Scripture as matters concerning which the christian world shall be judged at the last day. Thus, in *Math.* xxv. 34—36, humane and benevolent actions are expressly enumerated as causes for human acceptability before Christ as our judge, as also that inhumanity, and want of benevolence on the other hand, shall constitute the ground for the condemnation of others. Our Saviour's words in *Math.* vi. 14, 15, are also to the same purport, "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly father will forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." We are also told we shall be judged according to our words, (*i. e.* as they are irreligious or religious in their tendency) (*Math.* xii. 36) "every idle word," (*i. e.* irreligious speech,) "that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment, for by thy words thou shalt be justified and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

Other particulars again are distinctly inferrible as being acceptable in the sight of our judge, from being the contraries of those sins for which wicked men shall be condemned, such as those mentioned in that fearful enumeration made by Paul in *Gal.* v. 19—21, "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of which I tell you before," (*i. e.* I now warn you,) "as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

But in no intimation concerning the day of judgment is there any thing said as to any one being saved by the orthodoxy of his faith or creed, or by any act of faith abstractedly considered, which circumstance I presume shews distinctly that we have correctly estimated what the apostles meant, when they preached salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, *i. e.* that it is the means by which men

may be saved if they comply with Christ's requirements, but not as saving them by any mere act of belief beyond *the forgiveness of past sin*, at the time of a true conversion. (Vol. II. 74, 84 and note.) This view is very clearly enforced by the statement made by Christ himself. (*Math. vii. 21, &c.*) "Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, *but he that doeth the will of my Father, which is in heaven.* Many will say to me in that day," (i. e. the day of judgment,) "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me *ye that work iniquity.*"

These remarkable circumstances involve very important considerations respecting the ultimate acceptability of mankind before their judge at the last day; for though it is undoubtedly true that a sincere penitent who seeks forgiveness from God, shall have *his past sins forgiven* for Christ's sake, it is equally evident from the Scripture, that this pardon is granted upon the sole consideration that the penitent will henceforth live a godly, righteous, and sober life, striving after righteousness to perfection. In what light then must we regard those cases that so often occur, when an individual after an irreligious, often after a profligate life, but now sick and dying, on the very verge of eternity professes great contrition for his past transgressions, and throws himself entirely on the mercy of God through Jesus Christ as his only hope for salvation. Is any one justifiable in preaching peace to such a person? and thus, indirectly at least, encouraging the bystanders to trust also to a similar death-bed repentance.* On the one hand it is true we have

* It is impossible to estimate the extent of the mischief occasioned in the world by the conduct of the clergy respecting the consolations offered by them at the death beds of irreligious persons. The reader however may form some notion of its extent with the thoughtless or irreligious, when the celebrated Dr. Johnson could make the following observation as recorded by Boswell, respecting the possible salvation of a man *killed in a duel.* Sir, said Johnson, "we are not to judge determinately of the state in which a man leaves this life. *He may in a moment have repented effectually, and it is possible may have been accepted of God.*" There is in Camden's Remains an epitaph upon a very wicked man, who was killed by a fall from his horse, in which he is supposed to say

"Between the stirrup and the ground,
I mercy asked, I mercy found."

The pernicious consequences of such doctrines cannot be too strongly insisted upon, for they actually embolden men to continue their sinful lives. Or, as I have seen it quaintly stated in a Universalist publication, the "sinner is assured that he can at any time previous to death *take the benefit of an insolvent act* under the name of repentance, and cheat justice out of the whole debt," i. e. that obedience due to the law of Jehovah.

no right to limit the grace of God, or to say in what manner he may choose to exercise his prerogative, but on the other hand no such doctrine of salvation is any where recognized in the Scriptures. The instance of the penitent thief on the cross so commonly referred to, has no application to such cases, as there is no justifiable ground to assume he was an immoral or wicked person. The reasons for coming to this conclusion we have already stated in our note, Vol. II. 29.

Moreover the penitent thief as he is called, confessed Christ as soon as he was convinced that he was the Messiah. But this is not the case with irreligious men. They have known of the salvation preached through him for a long time, but they have disregarded it or even may have scoffed at it. There is therefore no parallelism in the case, and consequently nothing to justify the ordinary application of it to irreligious christians.

But to return to the solemnities of the last day. The judgment having been completed and the righteous separated from the wicked, our Saviour will then address the former in words to this purport: (*Math. xxv. 34.*) "Come ye blessed of my Father, INHERIT THE KINGDOM PREPARED FOR YOU FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD." Thus distinctly recognizing that Jehovah's purposes in the creation of mankind, was to obtain subjects or citizens for the future kingdom of heaven from among them, of such persons as would attain to the required perfection through their own voluntary agencies, and by which they may probably be also qualified for some further or ulterior purpose.

At the same time that the righteous are accepted, the wicked are rejected as not having attained to the required perfection in those particulars of moral excellence for which the righteous were commended. (*Math. xxv. 31—46.*) And then in the anticipation of the fearful doom that awaits the inexcusable folly and perverseness of their past lives, we find the meaning of those passages of the New Testament that speak of the horror and lamentations of the wicked, as expressed by "weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth." (*Math. viii. 11, 12; xiii. 41, 42, 49, 50; Luke xiii. 28.*)

The manner in which the destruction of the wicked shall be accomplished, I apprehend is clearly depicted to us in certain passages of the New Testament, which it may be important to lay before the reader as exhibiting the full consummation of Jehovah's purposes with mankind and the earth which we now inhabit.

Paul has informed us, (1 *Thess. iv. 16, &c.*) the Lord (Jesus Christ) himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the

voice of the archangel; and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we (*i. e.* the true believers in Christ) which are alive and remain, (*i. e.* who shall be living at that time,) shall be caught up with them, (deceased christians,) in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (*i. e.* Jesus Christ.)

The righteous being thus withdrawn from the earth, the wicked only are left behind, and then ensues the consummation predicted by the apostle Peter, in his second epistle, (*chap. iii. 7, 10, &c.*) who has told us that "the heavens and the earth are reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and *perdition* of ungodly men," then "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent (intense) heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Nevertheless we according to his promise look for a new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness."

The legitimate inference from the preceding statement, I apprehend, is not that the earth itself will be consumed and destroyed in this general conflagration of all things, but that it will be purified by the operation of the intense fire to which it will be subjected, which will utterly destroy and consume, not only the works of mankind but all wicked intelligences whether men or devils. This I apprehend is the actual fulfilment of what has been figuratively exhibited to us in *Rev. xx. 10, &c.* "And the devil that deceiveth them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophet are and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever. And death and hell (*hades*) were cast into the lake of fire. *This is the second death.* And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

That these expressions are in part metaphorical it would be unnecessary to prove, for it is impossible that *death* or *hades* can be cast into fire, as they are mere states or conditions of things.

As I apprehend the direct inference from *Rev. xxi.* is, that the earth itself shall be renovated and thus become a suitable place for the righteous, so the fires to which the wicked were subjected cannot be eternal as to their duration, though they are so in a restricted sense as accomplishing the utter destruction of the wicked who had been left behind, when Christ and those saved by him forsook the earth.* If, on the contrary, however, it be deemed

* Macknight in the preliminary discourses to his translation of the Epistles, (*Essay i.*) says, "the wicked being left behind on the earth, *it follows that they are to perish in the flames of the general conflagration.*"

more scriptural to suppose that the earth itself shall be altogether burned up, consumed and destroyed, then the wicked are altogether burned up, consumed and destroyed with it, and then it would follow that the new heavens and new earth described by John (*Rev. xxi.*) are to be anticipated in some other part of Jehovah's universe. Which of these two opinions be the more plausible the reader can determine for himself, they are nothing more than speculations however, and involve no principle of christian faith.

I shall say nothing on the present occasion as to my view that the wicked are utterly destroyed or annihilated, since the arguments for coming to that conclusion are stated in the Appendix, Art. No. 6, in connection with an investigation concerning the supposed inherent immortality of the human soul.

INVESTIGATION CONCERNING THE SACRAMENTS.

As there is a seeming propriety in discoursing on the Sacraments in connection with our preceding exposition of Christian Doctrines, we will now attempt to exhibit the nature and purport of those ordinances, as apparently contemplated in their institution by the founder of the Christian Dispensation.

The only ceremonial institutions pertaining to Christianity authorized by Christ or the apostles, were Baptism, and that commemoration of the death of the Lord Jesus commonly termed the Lord's Supper. These two institutions are not designated by any common word in the apostolic writings. Theologians however, have seen fit to classify them under the use of terms derived from ancient heathen observances, which as they have tended to perpetuate false notions on the subject, it may not be unimportant to lay before the reader.

In the Eastern, or Greek portion of the Roman empire, the theologians included Baptism and the Lord's Supper under the term *Mυσηγία*, which signifies *mysteries* or *arcana*, which word was most probably applied to these institutions from the reverence with which the ancient heathens in that part of the empire regarded the mysteries of Eleusis, and other similar secret religious associations. Into these mysteries the heathen were initiated under very solemn exhibitions, and in which they were taught doctrines not only in reference to their conduct in the present life, but as enlightening them concerning that future condition of things that they anticipated after death. As the word *Mystery* therefore in this part of the empire involved a very reverential signification, so in an accommodated sense it was used by the Greek theologians to designate those institutions of Christianity, that conveyed a hidden or symbolical signification through the *media* of outward ceremonies.

In the Western or Latin portion of the Roman Empire, where the *mysteries* of the Greeks were little known, and of little estimation among them as far as they were known, the Latin christians adopted as their common term the word *sacramentum*, which

was held in great reverence among the Romans as implying the obligation of an oath, and more especially that oath taken by soldiers when they were enrolled to fight under any particular commander. In this accommodated sense, the Latin theologians applied the term *sacmenta* to Baptism and the Lord's Supper, as implying that all partakers in these ordinances, took as it were an oath to be faithful to Christ, and as such the term has descended to our day, greatly enlarged however by recondite and mysterious significations which theologians have engrafted on it by their speculations concerning the nature and efficiency of those institutions. So far as Baptism is concerned, the analogy of the Latin word *sacramentum* to that rite is not improper, for it does imply an enlisting or enrolling of men as christians under the Lord Jesus Christ, whom they promise to obey in every particular that he has required from them. But in respect to the Lord's Supper, there is no analogy whatever between it and the Latin word *sacramentum*, as our explanation of the Roman usage sufficiently indicates. If the term however be distinctly recognized as one of mere human adoption for a convenient use only, and not as implying any sacred sense, there is no impropriety in using it notwithstanding its heathen origin.*

In order to comprehend the true light in which we as christians are to regard the sacraments, we must not only ascertain from the New Testament what is there stated on the subject of their institution, but we must restrict ourselves rigidly to what is there taught, and not be led aside by mere fancied proprieties or mystical interpretations of presumptuous theologians, who have set no bounds to their speculative inferences. Bishop Burnet has well observed on the twenty-second article, "Sacraments are positive precepts which are to be measured only by the institution, in which there is not room left for us to carry them further."

The ordinary definition of a sacrament among Protestants, is, "that it is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ himself as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof." There are some variations among different Protestant sects as to the form in which this definition may be given, but I apprehend that substantially it expresses the common belief. It is also virtually

* It appears from Hagenbach, (*Hist. Doct.* i. 205,) that the word *μυστηριον* (mystery) in the christian sense, first occurs in the writings of Justin Martyr, who flourished about A. D. 140. And that Tertullian (A. D. 190) is the first who uses the term *sacramentum*.

the doctrine of the Catholic church, from whom undoubtedly the Protestants have derived it.*

If we examine the New Testament in order to ascertain the accuracy of this definition, we find nothing to justify it, for there is not a single passage in those writings that inform us that sacramental institutions are means of grace, and consequently whoever asserts this does so on the authority of theologians, and not from any warrant of the New Testament. If a man chooses to say, that as the sacraments are positive institutions of Christ so our obedience to his requirement is followed by an increase of grace, his assumption amounts to nothing, for the same communication of grace may be as correctly inferred to follow our faithful obedience in any other particular of Christ's requirement. Consequently if every act of obedience is a mean of grace as well as the sacraments, it is evidently unjustifiable to speak of them as being means of grace more peculiarly so than other acts of obedience. But the New Testament writers do not speak of them as being means of grace in any manner whatever, and therefore those who have assumed the responsibility of instructing others in the doctrines of Christianity, should look to themselves for allowing their people to entertain such notions on the subject, though they may not directly teach such doctrines.†

As it is a matter of great importance to have correct views concerning the sacraments, I shall now proceed to investigate the various particulars involved in their institution, as far as the subject has been announced in the New Testament. And in the first place of Baptism, on which subject there is a very great amount of controversy, not only as to its object and influence, but also as to the persons to whom this rite should be administered, as well as the mode in which it is to be applied.

* There is a very valuable amount of information on the general subjects of the Sacraments, in Burnet's Hist. Reform. See Records, &c. to book iii. art. 21, which the reader may consult with advantage.

† Means of grace is an elliptical expression which signifies the means by which we may obtain favor or grace from God. There is however no mean or mode in which Jehovah's favor may be procured but by complying with his express appointments to that end. Now Jehovah has promised his grace or favor to all who ask it of him in prayer, and he has not promised it to those seeking it in any other mode. Grace, therefore, is the recompence of faith exercised towards God through devout supplication, and may be obtained by simply asking it of him. Reading the Scriptures, partaking of sacraments, discharging of moral or religious duties, therefore, are not means of grace, they are either means for instruction, duties, or adjuncts to duty, either as being requirements made of our obedience, or as enabling us to comprehend our duties more perfectly. There is therefore, correctly speaking, but one mean of grace, which as we have said above is the direct application to God in prayer.

ON BAPTISM.

Much of the confusion that perplexes christians concerning baptism, arises from the subject not being regarded in its connection with the essential phenomenon of human nature, as being free agents undergoing probation or discipline through their own voluntary action. But as every particular of Jehovah's dispensations towards mankind must be harmonious with each other, so the investigation of a controverted subject pertaining to his appointments, must ever be regarded under the restrictions of the general scheme appointed by Jehovah. From the Scripture we distinctly comprehend that his purpose in the creation of mankind is, that they shall attain to a certain intellectual and moral perfection through their own voluntary action, according to which they shall either be accepted or rejected by him at the day of judgment. No institution therefore of Christianity can ever interfere with Jehovah's scheme, by setting aside human responsibilities in any manner as free agents. The recognition therefore of the rite of baptism as being thus involved with the essential phenomenon of our probationary condition, will remove much of that cloudy speculation that rests upon it, in consequence of its being too often regarded in a point of view anomalous to the general phenomena of human nature as implicated in the theory of their probationary condition.

That Baptism was an institution of Christ appointed to be of continual observance in the organization of his followers, is not only the direct inference from the last words of Christ to his disciples, (*Math. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 16,*) but it is distinctly sustained by the practice of the apostles afterwards. Thus the three thousand converts of the day of Pentecost were baptized. (*Acts ii. 38, 41.*) The Samaritans. (*Acts viii. 12.*) Saul of Tarsus. (*Acts ix. 19.*) Cornelius the centurion. (*Acts x. 47, 48.*) Certain persons who had only received John's Baptism. (*Acts xix. 3—5.*) Nothing therefore seems more clear than the divine obligation of the rite; and the non-compliance with it on the part of the Society of Friends, is only one among numerous other instances establishing the fact, that in the elaboration of theological schemes, men will make *their theology consistent with itself*, although it may require them to expound the Scripture in such a manner as to make it signify something entirely different from its teaching, even though sustained by express examples of what its divinely commissioned promulgators considered to be its true practical operation.

That the Jews used a form of baptism or lustration with those heathens who renounced idolatry to become Jewish proselytes, is sufficiently clear from the rabbinical writings, and though their practice be without any Scripture warrant, it may perhaps be advisable to take notice of the fact. The substance of what the rabbis have said on this matter, is, (*Wotton's Trad. of the Scribes* i. 103,) that all male proselytes were received into the Jewish nation by circumcision, *baptism*, and sacrifice; and all females by *baptism*, and a sacrifice. Children born before their parents became proselytes, if under age, were brought to baptism by them. If the children were of age, it was left to their own choice whether they would be proselytes or not. If they were born after the proselytism of their parents, there was no need of baptism. Those who were thus made proselytes were regarded by the Jews as *born again*, (regenerated,) and were supposed to have renounced their former heathen parentage and relations, and to be as if they were entirely *new persons* in such particulars. See also *Lightfoot* iii. 38; iv. 155, 245, 407, 411.

The first mention of baptism in the Scripture, is in the history of John the Baptist, by which we learn that John, whose office it was to prepare the way for the reception of the Messiah, came proclaiming his near approach, and at the same time calling upon the Jews that heard him to qualify themselves to receive the Messiah, by becoming such persons as would be most acceptable to him. This, John informed them, would be by reforming their lives, *i. e.* in forsaking evil, and doing works of righteousness and mercy. To those persons who resolved on following John's directions, he administered the rite of baptism, the purport of which we shall now endeavor to ascertain.

I, says John, (*Math.* iii. 11,) baptize you with water unto repentance, *i. e.* by the administration of this rite *you take upon you* that work of personal reformation, (*Luke* iii. 10—14,) *that I have preached to you*, by which you are to qualify yourselves so as to be acknowledged as subjects of king Messiah when he shall make his appearance among you. Or, in other words, as it had been announced by the angel to John's father, (*Luke* i. 17,) “to make ready a people prepared for the Lord,” (*i. e.* the Messiah.)

John's baptism therefore as a *mere rite*, was an assumption on the part of the recipient of an obligation to perform all that was required of him by the baptizer.

Our Saviour when he commenced his ministry acted in the same manner as John the Baptist. He proclaimed the kingdom of

heaven and called on men to repent and amend their lives as the qualification for an admission therein, and which his converts recognized by being baptized to that observance. It is also true that indirectly he taught them they could only be saved through him, but certainly his disciples did not baptize their converts into the faith that he was the Messiah, during his life; for he expressly forbade them to announce him as such to any one.—*Math. xvi. 20.*

Our views therefore concerning Christian Baptism must be deduced from what the Scriptures recorded on the subject after Christ's resurrection.

What the apostles and disciples of our Lord proclaimed to mankind concerning him and his office is distinctly recorded in various places of the New Testament. See more especially, *Acts* ii. 38—40; iii. 19, 26; iv. 12; v. 31; x. 42, 43; xx. 21, &c.

The substance of which is, that he was the Messiah, through whom forgiveness of sin was only to be obtained, as well as an everlasting inheritance hereafter in the kingdom of heaven. But to make these privileges available his disciples were to avoid all unrighteousness, and conform strictly for the future to all of Christ's requirements whether of faith or practice.

This condensed view of the nature of baptism is sustained by the positive annunciation of Christ; (*Mark* xvi. 15, 16,) “*he that believeth and is baptized* shall be saved, but he that believeth not, shall be condemned,” (*i. e.* his sins cannot otherwise be forgiven.)

I apprehend therefore that the purport of the rite of baptism is evident, and that it implies nothing more than a public recognition of Jesus of Nazareth as being king Messiah, the Saviour of mankind. It is the public profession of spiritual allegiance to him on the part of an intellectual moral free agent, who thus before his fellow men recognizes the doctrine that his sins are pardoned for Christ's sake, and that he furthermore takes upon himself the performance of those obligations required by Christ, under the full confidence of thus obtaining, if he be faithful in his obedience, an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven.

Our view of the mere rite of baptism may be familiarly illustrated to us as citizens of the United States, by the mode in which persons born out of our country acquire the rights of citizenship. A foreigner who arrives in the United States, under the belief that it will be advantageous, desires to become a citizen. To obtain this privilege he first renounces any obedience he may be supposed to owe to the country in which he was born, and he then takes an oath of allegiance to the United States, by which he promises a

faithful obedience to all the laws of our country. He may be utterly ignorant of the innumerable particulars involved in those laws, or how they may hereafter interfere with his individual action, yet nevertheless he so far comprehends the theory of our government and its institutions, that he is willing to promise obedience to them in all their requirements.

It was precisely the same thing when baptism was first instituted. Individuals having become convinced that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, they then availed themselves of the invitation made by the apostles and others, to become his spiritual subjects. After making an open profession of their faith in that particular, they were then baptized into all the privileges of Christianity; some with a greater, others with a less degree of intellectual discernment on the subject, but still every one acknowledged the obligation of believing or doing whatever he should ascertain to be required of him by Jesus Christ. Instead of taking a formal oath as is done when a foreigner is naturalized under our laws, the believer in Jesus Christ was publicly baptized into his spiritual allegiance by the application of pure water, which did not signify any washing away of former sin, a notion which has led to a very false idea concerning the rite of baptism, but it implied emblematically the purity of that life the new christian must lead henceforth. This interpretation is expressly recognized by the apostle Peter, (1 Pet. iii. 21,) "baptism is not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer (or testimony) of a good conscience toward God."

I am unaware of any passage in the New Testament that implies the reception of baptism was accompanied with any sensible grace. That insensible grace may have been bestowed upon the sincere convert we will not undertake to deny, but that there was any peculiar grace communicated more than on any other act of obedience, there is not a single passage in the New Testament to justify. When the great conversions of the day of Pentecost took place, (Acts ii. 41, &c.) and were consummated by baptism, there are no intimations that any spiritual influence was manifested on the occasion.

When Saul was baptized, (Acts ix. 18, &c.) no spiritual influence is recorded to have taken place,

When Philip baptized the Samaritans, his ministry undoubtedly was unattended with any manifestation of the Holy Spirit. But afterwards when Peter and John came and laid their hands on them, (Acts viii. 12—17,) then those who *had been baptized* by Philip, received the Holy Spirit.

When Peter went to Cornelius, the Holy Spirit fell upon him and the other heathens then present, while he was addressing them, which circumstance induced Peter to say, (*Acts x. 47,*) “can any man forbid water, that these (heathens) should not be baptized which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we,” (*Jews.*)

When Paul baptized certain disciples at Ephesus no visible effect followed, but after he had lain his hands upon them, then the Holy Spirit came on them.—*Acts xix. 2—6.*

In short, I know of no passage in the New Testament that implies the reception of grace by baptism, and this view is still further sustained by the histories of Ananias and Sapphira, Simon Magus, &c. which abundantly shews there was no regenerating influence of the Spirit communicated to them by the administration of the rite.

But whether insensible grace accompanied baptism or not, yet the act of baptism was always supposed to imply the spiritual change or regeneration of the person baptized, and I presume the connection is inseparable. For whenever an individual became convinced of the truth of the doctrines preached by the apostles or other early ministers of the gospel, such conversion was necessarily consummated according to our Saviour’s requirement by baptism; and in the fact of the entire change of the individual for the future from his former manner of life, whether as a Jew or Gentile, he became spiritually speaking a new man, or as metaphorically expressed he was regenerated, or born anew. Hence the terms baptism and regeneration were originally used synonymously, in fact they could not be separated when baptism was first instituted, for as no one could be considered regenerated until he was baptized into an open profession of his faith in Jesus Christ, so whenever a man was truly converted, baptism necessarily followed as being the express appointment of the Redeemer.

In thus regarding baptism as administered to adults or to young persons of sufficient age to be converted to a belief in the truths of Christianity, I apprehend there will be no material difference of opinion among my readers as to the correctness of the statement I have deduced from the New Testament. But I must now enter upon the discussion of a subject on which the widest differences of opinion exist among professing christians, to wit, whether infants, or very young children ought to be baptized. On this special subject we have no express instruction in any part of the New Testament either as directing or forbidding them to be baptized. The solution of the question therefore is only to be sought through

inferences deduced from various incidental passages of the New Testament writings.

The undoubted fact that there is not a single direction in the whole New Testament concerning the baptism of young children, seems to me conclusive against the supposition that the apostles ever contemplated that such were to be baptized. The importance of this inference may be more distinctly appreciated from the following considerations.

The administration of baptism to adults *as founded on their individual faith*, is so distinctly implied throughout the New Testament that no one who recognizes baptism as a permanent institution of Christianity differs from his christian brethren on that point. It is also equally evident, that as neither infants nor young children can possibly exercise any *personal faith*, so if they were to be baptized under the institutions of Christ, they could only have received that rite upon a principle entirely different from that by which it was to be administered to adults. Yet we have no instruction whatever from the apostles on that subject. This omission is intelligible enough on the supposition that children were not to be baptized, but it is wholly incomprehensible if it was intended to be administered to them. The circumstance is still more remarkable in the fact, that according to the covenant of God with the Jews, male infants were to be circumcised, as being essential to their covenant privileges. How comes it then, where express provision is made that persons professing personal faith in Jesus Christ should in consequence be baptized upon that faith into covenant relations with Jehovah, that nothing should be said on the subject of infants, who are incapable of exercising personal faith, if at the same time it was a part of the christian covenant that infants were to be baptized.

Christian parents ought also to have been instructed by the apostles within what limitation as to time after birth, baptism ought to be administered to infants. This necessity was so evident, and yet so undetermined, that Cyprian's Council held at Carthage two hundred and fifty years after Christ, met together chiefly to determine this matter. A plain proof one would suppose that the christian world were previously wholly without any established rule on the subject.

Again, if infant baptism was essential to a child, the apostles ought to have instructed their disciples how to proceed where one of the parents was an unbeliever. Sometimes this was the case with the father, at other times with the mother. Yet the apostles

did not determine this matter, and in consequence theologians and clergymen have been obliged to supply their omission, which they have done in such a manner as to claim the child in either case. Thus the fourth Council of Toledo, A. D. 633, resolved, "in the case of such women as had Jews for their husbands, that the children born of them should follow the faith and condition of the mother; and so on the other hand they who had unbelieving mothers and believing fathers, should follow the christian religion and not the Jewish superstition."

We further remark against the doctrine of infant baptism, that though Paul, Peter and John have addressed parents as to how they were to bring up their children, they have not in a single instance reminded them to have them baptized. Neither did these apostles in exhorting children, ever instruct them that they had been in their infancy baptized into an obedience of the christian faith.

Unless baptism be efficacious as an *opus operatum*, I therefore cannot comprehend why it should be administered to infants. The church of Rome acts consistently in this particular, and not only baptizes infants, but catechumens in a state of unconsciousness, in a swoon, or in a delirium. (*Bergier Dict. de Theol. art. Sacrament.*) But Protestants are inconsistent on the subject, for they generally do not consider baptism to be requisite to the salvation of a child dying before a responsible age. If the rite therefore be not essential to salvation in such a case, we have no right to administer it upon any notions of our own as to its supposed advantage in an ecclesiastical point of view, as making the child a partaker in the mere external privileges that belong to a worshipping assembly of christians. The question is not, whether baptism may not be indirectly advantageous to an infant, but whether it is so spiritually, as being an institution of Christ. If any one should reply that we do not know how far baptism may be spiritually beneficial to infants, this is nothing to the point in controversy; for to suppose that what we know nothing about, may nevertheless be beneficial, is not only begging the question, but it is begging it in favor of a practice that is in itself contrary to the whole scope of the Christian Dispensation, which invariably requires from mankind intellectual obedience and personal faith in order to entitle them to gospel privileges, and as such is altogether opposed to the recognition of any act as an *opus operatum*.

Baptism as received by an adult from his voluntary act as a testimony of his faith in Jesus Christ is perfectly intelligible, and con-

sistent with every portion of the New Testament writings,—and not being an *opus operatum* through which he receives divine grace; so it follows that an infant who is not baptized is not deprived of any grace. If the rite, by the institution of Christ, was to be administered only to those who sought it, it never could be considered a privation of grace to those who were unable to exercise their free agency on the subject. As children grow in years and are instructed in the truths of the christian revelation, their responsibility increases proportionately until the whole subject becomes known to them in all its vast personal consequences. Then as free agents they can avail themselves of the appointment of Jehovah, and being convinced that salvation is only attainable through Jesus Christ, they are then baptized into an obedience of faith to him, and become participants in whatever privileges Jehovah has condescended to promise to their personal faith.

Though I have stated the clear doctrine of the Scripture as to the persons to whom baptism is to be administered, yet some of my readers may think that I ought also to confute the arguments that are advanced by the advocates of infant baptism, before the opinions that I have maintained can be fairly considered as the exposition of the Scripture. This might possibly be reasonably required from a mere controversialist, but as I have only undertaken to give an exposition of what I consider the Scripture to teach, I do not think that I am called upon to discuss every variety of interpretation that may be put upon incidental passages of Scripture which I consider to have been wrested to signify something different from the direct teaching of the New Testament writings. Yet, as this subject of baptism is of great importance as leading men to a correct understanding of the scheme involved in the Christian Dispensation, I shall, on that account, undertake to shew the fallacies of the principal arguments in favor of infant baptism.

One of the most prominent arguments urged by the advocates for infant baptism, is the observation of Christ, (*Mark x. 14; Luke xviii. 16,*) “suffer little children to come unto me,” &c. These words not only have no connection whatever with baptism, but in my apprehension they militate directly against the notion of infant baptism, for the very verses quoted inform us that the disciples *reproved those who brought these children to our Lord.* Is it probable that the disciples would have acted in such a manner, if they had been accustomed to see young children brought by their parents to be baptized? That the disciples had before this time

been in the practice of baptizing proselytes is evident, for we are informed (*John* iv. 1, 2) they had done so during the life time of John the Baptist. The little children mentioned above were brought to Christ near the termination of his ministry, a little before he made his triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

Another argument of the paedo-baptists is, that the apostles are stated in the New Testament to have baptized *households*, from which expression it is assumed that in every household there are young children or infants, and therefore that very young children or infants must have been baptized by them. But disregarding the assumption that there are always young children in every household, which is in itself wholly gratuitous, the inference deduced from the expression of baptizing households, is sufficiently confuted by other passages in which it is said that households *believed*, which is impossible as to infants. See for instance *John* iv. 5; *Acts* x. 2; xvi. 32, 34.

I apprehend the principle recognized by Dr. Arnold on this subject, (*Letter to Rev. I. Hearn, May 20, 1833,*) is perfectly conclusive. "I hold it," says he, "to be a most certain rule of interpreting Scripture, that it never speaks of *persons*, when there is a physical impossibility of its speaking *to them, &c.*"* Hence as we have no instruction whatever as to any direct baptism of children on the part of the apostles, and as they distinctly recognize personal faith in all individuals who were baptized, so when they speak of *baptizing households*, it could only imply those members of the household who were of sufficient age to assume the christian profession through their own voluntary act.

Other advocates for infant baptism have contended, that as the Jews practiced baptism before the advent of the Messiah, so where there is no instruction given on the general subject, we ought to follow the prevailing practice, and therefore as the Jews did baptize the *infant children* of heathen proselytes, so in absence of positive instructions to the contrary, we ought to follow their practice.

But though the premise in this case is most comprehensive, the inference deduced from it is very partial, for the Jews baptized

* Chillingworth had long before made a similar observation. (*Relig. of Protestants, a Safer Way, &c. answer to seventh chapter.*) "The rule of the law, (i.e. of God,) is also the dictate of common reason and equity, that no man can be obliged to what is impossible. We can be obliged to nothing but by virtue of some command: now it is impossible that God should command in earnest any thing which he knows to be impossible, &c. Whosoever is obliged to do any thing and does it not, commits a fault; but infants commit no fault in not procuring to have baptism; therefore no obligation lies upon them to procure it."

the then living children only of those persons becoming proselytes. Their practice went no further. The children born of proselytes afterwards were not baptized, they were perfect Jews. Therefore according to the above inference as founded on Jewish practice, the children born of christian parents would not require baptism. But this is not the theory of christian baptism, for every one though born of christian parents, is required to be baptized individually. The supposed analogy of the Jewish baptism of children, has therefore no application to the case of the christian baptism of infants.

It is hardly worth while to confute the comparison that has been made between the circumcision of male infants under the Mosaic institutions, and the like-application of baptism to infants of both sexes. The value of this comparison is on the assumption, that if circumcision was profitable to an unconscious Jewish infant, why may not baptism be profitable to an unconscious christian infant? But such an inference is unjustifiable, for if circumcision was beneficial to the Jewish infant, it was so in consequence of being an express institution of Jehovah, whereas we have no promise of God that there is any grace bestowed by baptism in any case, and certainly none to infants, for they are not even mentioned in connection with the rite in a single passage of the New Testament.

We may also add to our preceding observation the remark, that if baptism took the place of circumcision under the Jewish law, as has been often contended, it is wholly incomprehensible why Paul did not make use of such a statement to silence the Judaizing christians, who gave him so much trouble by insisting on the necessity of circumcising the Gentile converts.

But the greatest argument as it is called of the paedobaptists, is their assertion that there never was a time in primitive Christianity in which the baptism of infants was not recognized, and hence they insist that as the practice had always prevailed in the christian church, so we have every reason for supposing it had been authorized by the apostles; for when men began to dispute upon the subject, it was not whether infants *ought to be baptized*, but whether there was not *an impropriety in baptizing them*; shewing according to such reasoning, that while the universal practice was to baptize children, that Tertullian and certain individuals who differed from the common opinion, contested that propriety against all the rest of the christian world.

Though I shall presently shew that this assertion of the paedobaptists is altogether incorrect, yet before I proceed to its confuta-

tion, I must caution my readers against ever allowing the traditions of the church to be introduced into any religious controversy as to what is the doctrinal teaching of the Scripture. We are alone contending for what is taught on the subject of baptism by the promulgators of Christianity in the New Testament writings, and consequently have nothing to do with the practice of professing christians two hundred years after Christ, for such is the earliest time in which we have any notice on the subject of baptizing children. Are we required to prove that the baptism of infants did not prevail during the whole period of this unrecorded two hundred years? The opponents of infant baptism have the right to demand proof from those holding the contrary doctrine, since we have shewn that the direct inference from the exposition of the New Testament writers is wholly adverse to the doctrine of baptizing any other persons than those capable of professing an intelligent faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.

Admitting, therefore, that the christian world about the beginning of the third century did baptize children, I am not bound to disprove the fallacy of their notions or traditions concerning baptism, any more than various other notions and traditions that prevailed at the same time. All that can be required of me I have already done in shewing that infant baptism is not only unsustained by any direct statement made in the New Testament, but that all negative inferences on the subject oppose such practice. Furthermore, it is wholly inconsistent with the theory of the Christian Dispensation which extends grace only to personal faith, and in no instance whatever recognizes any rite, ceremony, or observance as an *opus operatum*, which baptism most assuredly must be if it is administered to young children.

But though I stand upon my right to interpret the Scripture and all its requirements only by the Scripture itself, and consequently have nothing to do with traditions whether as explaining or confuting them, yet as the paedo-baptists regard the traditions of the christians of the third century concerning infant baptism to be of great importance, I will step aside from my proper position and investigate the true import of the testimony which the earlier fathers are supposed to give in favor of such practice.

The advocates for infant baptism consider that certain observations made by Tertullian, who flourished about A. D. 192, to be altogether conclusive as to the fact that children had been always baptized in the christian church, and that he manifested a singular inconsistency in objecting to what he there recognizes as being the

prevailing practice. This inference however, is most unjustifiable, not only as a mere deduction from his observations as we shall presently shew, but it is incredible as to its supposed import from the circumstance, that Tertullian was the greatest stickler *without exception, of all the earlier Fathers for conformity to the traditions of the Church.** If therefore it had been the universal practice of the church to baptize infants previously, Tertullian, who wrote his Treatise on Baptism before he became a Montanist, would have been the last person of that day to have disputed an institution sustained by the general tradition of the Christian Church. But as it is evident from his very remarks why he objected to the baptism of infants, it is manifest that he wrote against a practice which was not general, but which was extending itself in the Christian Church.

Tertullian in his discourse on Baptism, extols it in the highest manner as the mode appointed of God for the cleansing of mankind from all past sin. His doctrine is, that it not only thoroughly washes away all the defilement of past sin, but that it can never be repeated. “*We enter the laver but once, (says he,) our sins are washed away once,* because these (our sins) ought not to be repeated.”

According to this view that *sins are but once effaced by baptism*, Tertullian then argues that the *delaying* of the administration of the rite of baptism “is more profitable according to the condition, disposition, and the age of persons, but especially so in the case of children. For why is it necessary,” says he, “if the thing” (baptism) “be not so necessary,” (i. e. urgent or pressing) “that the sponsors also be brought into danger? for both they themselves may from their mortal nature fail of their promises, and they may be disappointed by the growing up of a bad disposition. The Lord indeed saith, *forbid them not to come unto me.* Let them come when they are of ripe years; let them come when they are disciples, when they are taught whither they are coming. Let them become christians when they are able to know Christ. *Why is the age of innocence in haste for the remission of sins, &c.* With no less reason *unmarried persons* also should be put off, within whom temptation is already prepared, as well as *virgins by reason of their ripe age, as in widows by reason of their wandering about, until they either marry or be confirmed in continency.* They that understand the

* If the reader should require proofs for this assertion, let him look in our INDEX for the reference to *Holy Catholic Church; rise of the doctrine*, under which head we quote Tertullian's express declarations.

“weighty nature” (*i. e.* importance) “of baptism, will fear *its attainment* rather than *its postponement*.”—*Tertul. Works, (Oxford Transl.)* i. 277, 278.

The evident inference from the above extract is, that baptism, previous to the time of Tertullian, had more or less lost the character of its primitive institution as a mere initiatory rite, and that many persons then regarded it as being an *opus operatum* which not only effaced all preceding sin in the recipient, but that without its administration, no one could enter into the future kingdom of heaven, according to the erroneous construction they had put upon *John* iii. 5. Regarding the baptism of adults in this false light of removing all previous sin *opere operato*, the primitive christians gradually began to administer it also to infants *whenever there was any apprehension of their death*. But as infants sometimes died suddenly before they could be baptized, and the prevailing doctrine being that without baptism they could not get to heaven, the practice was presently taken up by many persons of baptizing their children soon after birth, in order to at least ensure them an admission into the heavenly rest should they die before they attained to a responsible age.

Tertullian’s objection therefore was not against baptizing infants as constituting them members of the visible church of Christ, for no such view of the subject was held at that time, nor long after that I am aware of; he merely opposed the practice of baptizing children who were in *no danger of dying*. Why apply, says he, the all cleansing rite of baptism which can only be *once administered*, to a child who has not yet been guilty of actual sin? Let the rite be postponed until the sinful impulses of youth have passed by, and when the individual shall have become confirmed in the habits of a religious life, and thus all his previous guilt and sin will be effaced by the soul-purifying rite of baptism. But if there was any danger of an infant’s dying, Tertullian would have had it baptized *instanter*. This doctrine he expressly recognizes in a passage immediately preceding the extract we have just given from his *Treatise on Baptism*. He there contends, that though the administration of the rite of baptism, as an usage of the church, properly belonged to the clergy, yet that every christian originally had a right to administer it, and hence he infers that in a case of necessity, (*i. e.* of a person about to die unbaptized, and no clergyman being present,) if a christian layman did not then baptize, “he will be guilty of destroying a man, if he shall forbear to do that for him which he had free power to do.”

The practice of christians of the second century, in baptizing young children, as impugned by Tertullian, throws the greatest light upon the controversy as it exists in our day. With us the question is whether young children are entitled to be made members of the visible church of Christ through the rite of baptism, in virtue of which they are supposed to be in a state of grace and covenant relation with God, and thus receive spiritual benefits that are not extended to unbaptized children.

But such a question as this was never mooted in all primitive antiquity. The fathers advocated infant baptism exclusively on the ground that it was an *opus operatum*, essential to their eternal happiness in case of their death before attaining to years of discretion. It was their belief that if an infant died unbaptized, they either were damned in hell, or at any rate would not be received into the kingdom of heaven. On the same principle they also administered the bread and wine of the Lord's supper to infants even at the breast.*

That we have rightly estimated the views of the fathers on the subject of infant baptism is perfectly clear, for if there was no immediate fear of the death of the child, the custom of not baptizing them in the earlier ages of the church is so well known that nothing can be better established.

* As this practice directly invalidates all the inferences of the paedobaptists concerning the value of the traditions of the primitive christians respecting the baptism of infants, they have attempted to represent it as having been done only by some few superstitious individuals, and that it was not recognized by the church. The following extracts however will sufficiently shew that the administration of the Lord's supper to infants was directly advocated by some of the most eminent Fathers, that the practice was widely extended in the christian world, and that it has endured in the Eastern church even to the present day.

Daillé (*Right Use of the Fathers*, page 132,) says that St. Augustine in commenting upon *John vi. 53*, " Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man," &c. makes the following remarks: " Is there any man that dares affirm that this speech" (of our Saviour) " belongs not to *infants also*; or that they may have life in them without participating of this body, and of this blood ?

" Pope Innocent I., Augustine's cotemporary, speaks in the same manner, proving against the Pelagians that baptism is necessary for infants, to render them capable of eternal life, inasmuch as without baptism *they cannot communicate of the eucharist, which is necessary to salvation.*

" St. Cyprian also long before them, spake to the very same sense, and this Maldonate" (a theologian of the Council of Trent) " affirms to have been the opinion of *the first six centuries.*"

That the practice of giving the eucharist to infants prevailed extensively in France, Germany, England, &c. until the twelfth century, and among the Greek christians to the present day, may be seen in Bingham, *Antiq. Chris. Church*, lib. xv. chap. 4; Hart's *Eccles. Records*, 188, 192.

Thus the Emperor Constantine the Great would not be baptized till near his death, in order that the whole amount of his previous sins might be washed away by the administration of this all cleansing rite. The Emperors Constantius, Theodosius, Valentinian, and Gratian, all acted upon a similar motive.—*Daillé, Right Use of the Fathers, part ii.* 149.

Gregory of Nazianzen, born about A. D. 330, though the son of a bishop, and his mother also being an eminently religious woman, yet was not baptized until he was about thirty years old. As an event in his history will throw some light on the subject of baptism, as regarded at that time, I will bring it before the reader. When Gregory was about twenty years of age he was sent to Athens to complete his education. On the voyage the vessel in which he sailed was in such eminent danger of foundering at sea that the passengers gave themselves up for lost. At this appalling prospect Gregory (*Wall, Inf. Bap. ii. 53,*) says, “‘And whereas all the rest in the ship were terrified with the fear of their *bodily death*, I did more dreadfully fear *the death of my soul*, for I was in great hazard of departing this life unbaptized, amid the sea waters that were to be my death wanting that *spiritual water*.’ He goes on to shew how his lamentation and dread on that account were so great and so moving that the people on board forgot their own danger in compassion to those terrors which they saw were upon his soul.”

One might suppose from this statement that the first thing that Gregory would have sought after escaping shipwreck would be to procure baptism; on the contrary however it was deferred till ten years afterwards, (*Ullman, Life Greg. Naz. 48,*) when according to the superstitious belief of the time, his character being confirmed, and he about to become a clergyman, the rite of baptism was then administered to him, by which all his previous sins were supposed to be entirely effaced.

St. Augustine also, though born of a most devout mother according to the standard of Christianity, A. D. 354, yet was not baptized until his thirty-second year. His watchful mother however stood ever ready during his childhood to have him baptized whenever he was ill; and on one occasion every thing was prepared for the administration of the rite, but as he suddenly recovered his baptism was deferred, for which Augustine returned many thanks to God for this providential postponement of the all cleansing rite.*

* “Thou sawest Lord,” says Augustine, (*Confess. lib. i. chap. 11,*) “how while yet a boy, being seized on a time with a sudden oppression of the stomach, *and like near to death*:—Thou sawest my God, with what eagerness and what faith I

St. Basil, in like manner, though born of most religious parents, was not baptized until his twenty-first or twenty-ninth year, we know not which as there is some doubt as to the correct time.

That multitudes of persons acted on similar views, thus shewing that the primitive christians did not baptize infants as an appointed institution of the church, may be clearly seen in various passages of ecclesiastical writers of the third and fourth centuries. Thus St. Basil (A. D. 360) finding that many of his flock remained in the state of mere catechumens, addressed himself to them directly, urging them to be baptized, or in other words to make an open religious profession of Christianity, which necessarily implied their baptism. "Do you demur, and loiter, and put it off," says Basil, "when you have been from a child catechised in the word. Are you not yet acquainted with the truth? Having been always learning it, are you not yet come to the knowledge of it? A seeker all your life long! A considerer till you are old? When will you be made a christian? When shall we see you become one of us? Last year you were staying for this year, and now you have a mind to stay till the next. Take heed that by promising yourself a longer life you do not quite miss of your life. You do not know what change to-morrow may bring," &c.

Wall remarks (*Hist. Inf. Bap.* i. 148) that the above passage was the strongest he had met with in ecclesiastical antiquity against the practice of infant baptism. He then attempts to explain it away by supposing the unbaptized persons thus addressed by Basil, were the children of persons who though well wishers to Christianity had never been themselves baptized, and therefore could not present their children for baptism, although they had them instructed in the principles of christian truth. But nothing can be more gratuitous than this conjectural solution; for Basil says nothing of any neglect on the part of parents, which he could not have forborne to make if Wall's notion had been correct. The direct explanation is that the parents of the persons addressed by Basil, like those of

sought from the pious care of my mother, and thy church the mother of us all, *the baptism of thy Christ*, my God and Lord. Whereupon the mother of my flesh being much troubled, would in eager haste have provided for my consecration and cleansing by *the health giving sacraments*, confessing the Lord Jesus for the remission of sins, *unless I had suddenly recovered*. And so, as if I must needs be again polluted *should I live*, my cleansing (*i. e.* by baptism) was deferred, because the defilements of sin would, *after that washing*, bring greater and more perilous guilt."

After Augustine was in his thirtieth year his baptism was still postponed for the reason stated in his *Confessions*, lib. vi. chap. 13: "Continual effort was made to have me married, &c. so that the *health giving baptism might cleanse me*," &c.

Gregory Nazianzen, Basil himself, and St. Augustine, had deferred baptizing them under the general belief, that as baptism as an *opus operatum* obliterated all past sin, and could be but once administered, it ought to be postponed until they had become established in the obedience of a religious life. The consequence was the children having now attained to the moral responsibilities of adult life, were exhorted by Basil to embrace the christian religion, and be baptized into an open profession of it by their own act.

The manifest inference from these instances is direct, that infant baptism was not a recognized institution of the christian church down to the commencement of the fifth century; and that while many persons from a superstitious motive baptized infants for fear they might die without receiving the rite, yet thousands of others among the most eminently religious persons of that time, did not baptize their children, but deferred it until they should become personally religious in their lives, when on being baptized all their previous sins would be effaced *opere operato*. Such a condition of things is therefore manifestly irreconcilable with the assumption, that the primitive christians believed that Christ or his apostles required christian parents to have their infant children baptized as a principle of religious obligation.

Though I apprehend I have sufficiently sustained my view as to the theory under which infant baptism was advocated by certain of the primitive christians, I will yet add a few remarks upon the admission of Pelagius, that is also continually adduced by the paedobaptists as shewing the uniform tradition of the church in his time as to the apostolic institution of such practice.

Pelagius, in his controversy with St. Augustine, distinctly recognized that the practice of baptizing infants was scriptural, but this was undoubtedly admitted by him on the ground of its being an *opus operatum* essential to their salvation. Hence in his creed (*Wall on Infant Baptism*, i. 346) he says, "We hold one baptism which we say ought to be administered with the same sacramental words to infants, as it is to elder persons. If after baptism a man falls, we believe he may be recovered by repentance."

But Pelagius contended against Augustine that the salvation thus given by the rite of baptism was *opere operato*, and not by effacing the *guilt of original sin*. He merely differed from his opponents as to how baptism operated, or if the comparison be admitted, the parties were like two physicians who both agree in prescribing the same remedy, though they differ entirely as to the character of the disease for which it is prescribed. Nevertheless though Pelagius

admitted that baptism was beneficial to infants dying before intellectual responsibility, yet he did not believe that unbaptized children went to hell, as was asserted by St. Augustine. Hence his epigrammatic observation, "quo eant nescio, quo non eant scio," *i. e.* where they (unbaptized children) may go, I do not know, where they *do not go*, I do know.

Baptism gradually became so universally regarded by the primitive christians as a mere *opus operatum*, that some of the fathers considered it to be equally valid by whomsoever administered, whether by ecclesiastics or laymen, whether by religious or vicious men. Nay, even if performed by mere children in their inconsid- erate play.* Neither did it signify from what motive a child might be offered for baptism; even if for mere bodily health as was sometimes superstitiously done, yet St. Augustine says (*Wall Hist. Inst. Bap.* i. 194, 196) they were regenerated by virtue of the ordinance. Augustine in his Confessions (*lib. iv. chap. 8.*) says of his friend Nebridius, that "while he lay senseless in a death sweat," he was baptized entirely unconscious, and yet Augustine consoled himself for the loss of his friend, "that with thee (God) he might be preserved for my comfort."

Why infant baptism gradually prevailed in the primitive church until it became universal, may therefore be readily comprehended from our preceding exposition. The practice commenced at a very early period from a misapprehension of Christ's remarks to Nicodemus. (*John iii. 5.*) But after the doctrine of original sin began to prevail in christendom, and especially so after St. Augustine's time, when it was almost universally admitted that all persons were born tainted by Adam's sin, and as such under the curse of God, so all who died unbaptized were necessarily damned to

* Sozomen, in his *Eccles. Hist.* lib. ii. chap. 17, relates, that a bishop of Alexandria on a certain occasion "perceived some children playing on the sea shore, who were amusing themselves by imitating the ceremonies of the church. At first he considered the amusement as innocent, but on finding that the most secret of the mysteries were among the subjects of their imitation, he became troubled and communicated the matter to the chief of the clergy. The children were called together and questioned as to the game at which they were playing. At first they refused to reply. On being further pressed they confessed that Athanasius, (the future great champion of the Trinitarian doctrine,) was their bishop and leader, and that many children who had not been initiated, (*i. e.* baptized by the clergy) *had been baptized by him*. On finding that the exact routine of the church had been accurately observed, the bishop consulted the priests around him on the subject, and decided that it *would be unnecessary to re-baptize these who in their simplicity had been judged worthy of divine grace*. He therefore merely performed for them such offices as are inseparably connected with priestly ministrations," (*i. e.* he confirmed them by an imposition of hands.)

all eternity. This doctrine has been perpetuated in the Catholic church to this day, and was one of those corruptions of the primitive church that was merely modified by the Protestants at the time of the Reformation, instead of being totally rejected as ought to have been the case.

In concluding my remarks upon infant baptism, though I consider it an unjustifiable practice, without Scripture warrant and contrary to the theory of Christianity, yet as it concerns religious persons who have merely received infant baptism, I do not perceive any necessity that such should be re-baptized, when they have previously made an open profession of their faith in Jesus Christ, by joining themselves to some religious christian society under avowed acknowledgments of the obedience of life and conversation required of them by the New Testament writings. The reason for this inference is, that as I regard baptism to be merely an external rite, unaccompanied by any communication of grace, and appointed only for the introducing an individual through a public profession of his faith into the body of recognized disciples of Jesus Christ, so it seems to me it would be merely superstitious, that an individual whose faith, religious profession, and obedient life, had already established his christian character, should affect to place himself in the position of one just converted, merely in order to receive the baptismal aspersion more correctly. Such conduct as this would make the mere rite of baptism an *opus operatum* in the strongest point of view, which I contend is wholly contrary to every principle involved in the theory of Christianity.

But all persons baptized in infancy, when they make a public profession of their faith in Christ in order to be received into any society of christians, should then be re-baptized.

It may perhaps be well to remark in connection with the above, that we have no reason to suppose that the apostles themselves ever received christian baptism. Such was the opinion of the celebrated Robert Hall, himself a baptist preacher. See his Works, vol. i. 303.

Having thus discussed the subject as concerns the persons who are to be baptized, we next take up for investigation the mode in which baptism ought to be administered; a subject which is fully as much involved in the controversies of theologians as that of the proper persons entitled to receive it.

The word *to baptize*, as derived from the Greek verbs *bapto*, or *baptizo*, is of very unimportant consideration, as the words are not employed in the New Testament in an *etymological* but in a *technical sense*, for the term baptism not only implied a ceremonial use

of water, but it is used in a spiritual sense also; thus the New Testament (*Math.* iii. 11; *John* i. 33) speaks of a baptism by the Holy Spirit as being the important result of the Messiah's advent, and there is a still more recondite application of the term to a baptism that Christ himself was to undergo, (*Mark* x. 38; *Luke* xii. 50,) of which he said his more immediate disciples should also be partakers.

If the Greek words admitted of but one unvarying sense in their application, there might be some reason to insist upon some technical restriction as to their significance, but as they alike imply immersion, pouring, washing, sprinkling, it is unreasonable to insist upon any one of these interpretations as being technically involved in the administration of the rite, for this would be virtually making it an *opus operatum* through the mere mode of application.

The attempts to ascertain in what mode John the Baptist used water in the administration of his baptism, have been unattended with any certain conclusion. On two occasions he is stated in our English Bibles to have baptized *in the river Jordan*. (*Math.* iii. 6, 13.) This translation however is far from being determinate of the point, for the Greek prepositions translated *in*, also signify *at*, or *near*, equally well. Besides John baptized at other places where there was no river. Thus *Ænon* near Salim, (*John* iii. 23,) was about twelve miles from the Jordan. As the word *Ænon* signifies *a spring*, this locality is of some importance in this discussion, for it is, I apprehend, clearly identified with the spring *En-Askar*. (*Rabbi Schwarz Geog. Palest.* 160.) The phrase "because there was much water there," does not mean *deep water*, but an abundance of it.*

With respect to the mode in which our Saviour's disciples baptized their converts, we are unable to make any direct inference from the statements made in the New Testament writings, though we have a right, plausibly, to infer that they did not immerse. Thus after the great conversions of the day of Pentecost when three thousand persons are stated to have been baptized, the direct inference is, that they were baptized at Jerusalem by perfusion, or

* The reason why this circumstance is mentioned was, that it explained the great resort of persons to John at that place, for an abundant supply of water both for men and their beasts was essential to any large assemblage of people. This condition of things is well illustrated by the familiar instance of a Methodist camp-meeting, where a copious supply of water is one of the principal objects with them in selecting their camp-ground, not for the purpose of baptizing, which often occurs at such assemblings, but for their evident necessities and refreshment.

sprinkling, for there was no water in the brook Kedron in which they could have been immersed, and to suppose they used the public cisterns of drinking water for such a purpose, is alike absurd and gratuitous. No one can be required to prove the negative to such a supposition.

If the baptism of the above persons took place at the river Jordan, the nearest accessible place for immersion, (about twenty-three miles distant,) the circumstance of such a body of believers having been marched off for a period of not less than three or four days to obtain valid baptism, could hardly have been omitted to be stated by the evangelist. The silence of Luke on this matter is therefore a strong presumption that the first converts were not immersed.

Philip also baptized many persons at Samaria (*Acts* viii. 12) without any mention of immersion. There are brooks of water there, but as far as I can conjecture from the accounts of travellers there does not appear to have been any sufficient amount for immersion.

When Cornelius and others were baptized at Cæsarea, the direct inference is, that it took place in the house, otherwise we ought to expect that Peter would have directed them to be immersed in the *Nahr-Zirka*, a mile or more distant, if indeed it was sufficiently deep for such a purpose, which I have not been able to ascertain.

Paul was baptized at Damascus, but nothing is implied in the statement to induce us to suppose he was taken out of the house to be immersed in either of the two rivers at that city.

The jailor at Philippi, according to every fair construction of the narration, (*Acts* xvi. 25—34,) was baptized in his private apartments in the prison yard, and presumably by aspersion, or pouring, for it is wholly gratuitous to suppose a tank or bath was used on the occasion.

At Ephesus, Paul baptized certain disciples, (*Acts* xix. 1—5,) as if in the house where he may be supposed to have conferred with them. At least there is nothing said about taking them to be immersed in the river Cayster.

If the apostles therefore considered immersion essential to christian baptism, it is unaccountable that in all the instances mentioned by Luke in the Acts, that he should have omitted to state any particulars involving such a conclusion, when the facts lay so apparently in his way, that they seem necessary to complete the relation. But if baptism was performed by sprinkling or pouring, there is no difficulty in understanding why the mode in which the rite was administered was not mentioned, for as being done in dwelling houses,

aspersion or pouring water on the head was the only available means, and as such was universally understood.

Neither are there any observations made in the epistles that enlighten us on the subject, though there are two passages, one in *Rom. vi. 4*, and the other in *Coloss. ii. 12*, which in the metaphorical language of the apostle might seem to justify the inference that persons baptized were immersed under the water. Hence many of the advocates of baptism by sprinkling or pouring, have conceded that immersion is signified in the above texts.

Yet, for my part, I do not consider the language used in these places justifies any such conclusion. The object of the apostle undoubtedly was to impress upon the minds of those he addressed, that as Christ rose from the dead or state of death to a new position in the Dispensation of Christianity, so persons who had been baptized to Christ, were bound in virtue of their baptismal allegiance *to live a new life* in holiness and righteousness.

This doctrine is very often referred to by the apostle Paul, who frequently speaks of being *dead to the world through Christ*, of having been *crucified with Christ*, as having *risen from the dead with Christ*; the figurative meaning of which is sufficiently distinct as to the doctrine intended to be conveyed by such metaphors. Is the term *buried with Christ in, or by baptism*, to be regarded in a literal sense in this instance only, because of the supposed analogy between immersing a man in water and burying him in a grave?*

I cannot admit a literal application of the figure in these instances, seeing that other figures equally precise have been employed in speaking of the subject that are palpably incapable of literal application, and this belief is fully confirmed in my apprehension by the circumstance, that in all cases where the apostles are stated to have baptized individuals, the inference is seemingly direct that they could not have administered the rite otherwise than by sprinkling or perfusion.

That the practice of baptizing by immersion should prevail over the more simple rite of sprinkling or pouring, is very intelligible

* Schmucker, (*Elem. Pop. Theol. 22*) (*Lutheran*) has made a similar observation. "The texts, *Rom. vi. 4*, and *Coloss. ii. 12*, appear not to refer to the mode of baptism, but to the spiritual obligations which that ordinance imposes; it requires us to be *dead to the world*, buried to all earthly and sinful pursuits, growing together with him spiritually, 'planted' or grafted on him. What reason is there to suppose that one of these figures," (of speech) "refers to the mode of baptism rather than the other in the same sentence? And what mode of baptism would be indicated by being 'planted together with Christ by baptism.' Or what mode by putting on Christ like a garment."

from the accounts we have of the fanciful notions which led the primitive christians into so many frivolous and superstitious practices concerning the supposed mystical nature of baptism as an *opus operatum* that purified from all sin. To enable the reader to judge of this matter, I subjoin a note describing the ceremonial of baptism in the third century, from which he will perceive, that nothing was more consistent with such practices than to represent baptism as cleansing *from all sin*, by a symbolical washing of the whole body, *stripit entirely naked*, instead of the more simple rite of merely using water in an emblematic sense by aspersion or pouring on the head, to indicate the purity of life that the new convert was to live for the future.*

But be this as it may, as we have no authority from the New Testament to consider baptism to be an *opus operatum*, the mere mode in which the rite was administered has still less pretension to

*The following enumeration of the rites and ceremonies used by the primitive Christians in the administration of baptism, I have taken from *Bingham's Antiq. Christian Church, lib. 10-12.*

After having formally renounced the devil and all his works, they wore veils over their faces for several days, as being the image of Adam's slavery to sin after his expulsion from Paradise, &c.

Then their ears were touched, saying to them *Ephphatha*, be opened, and their eyes were anointed with clay in imitation of our Saviour, &c. They were also touched with a mystical oil, with many signings of the cross over them.

The water in which they were to be baptized was then "sanctified by the priest, that it may have power to wash away the sins of men."

They were then stripped entirely of their clothes, and *being wholly naked, whether men or women*, they were then dipped *three times* under the water, in the respective names of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

After the baptized persons came out of the water they were anointed with a certain holy ungent called *chrism*, and were then clothed in new white garments. This was to signify having put on the new man, Jesus Christ. These garments were worn eight days, during which time they carried lighted tapers in their hands, signifying, &c.

They also received the holy kiss as a sign of their admission into the Christian brotherhood, and honey and milk was given them to taste. Then the imposition of hands was made, and finally they received the communion of the Lord's Supper.

As some persons affect to regard the institutions of primitive Christianity with a superstitious reverence, I think it proper to insist particularly on the fact that in the third century both men and women when baptized *were divested of all their clothes*. Cyril of Jerusalem in his Catechetical Lectures, calls the attention of those recently baptized to the circumstance. "As soon as ye entered in," (the place where baptism was to be administered) "ye put off your garment, &c. Having stripped yourselves ye were naked, in this also imitating Christ, who hung naked on the cross, &c.

"O wondrous thing! ye were naked in the sight of all and were not ashamed; for truly ye bore the likeness of Adam who was naked in the garden, and was not ashamed."

be regarded in that light, for certainly the faith of the person baptized is the all-important matter whether it be performed by sprinkling or by immersion, and since the evangelists and apostles have given us no certain instruction as to the mode, I apprehend we are at liberty to consult convenience as to a rite which has only a symbolical meaning.

ON THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Whatever may have been the opinions of the primitive Christians as to the propriety of administering this sacrament to infants and young children, their doctrine on that subject has long since passed away but in a single exception, for at the present time all christians but those of the Greek church, concur in administering the eucharist only to those persons who are of sufficient age to have an intelligent comprehension of its presumed object or purpose. On this latter subject there are wide differences of opinion among professing christians, yet I apprehend there is no difficulty in estimating the object contemplated by Christ in its institution, if we will only confine ourselves to the exposition given in the New Testament, and disregard the presumptuous teachings of divines and theologians.

To appreciate the true nature and purport of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, we must not compare the texts of Scripture bearing on the subject with our present modes of administering the ordinance. For our practice now-a-days is based upon an assumption entirely different from that upon which the ordinance was instituted. We must therefore, to comprehend our subject correctly, go back to the time when Christ first appointed this commemoration, by which we shall be enabled to fully perceive the object contemplated by him.

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ the night before he was crucified. He and his disciples had just partaken of the paschal supper, which reminded them as Jews, of their national deliverance through the power of Jehovah, from their bondage to the Egyptians, and which was at the same time implicated with the remarkable circumstance that their first-born children were preserved in life, while the destroying angel visited with death every house in Egypt, which had not its doors sprinkled with the blood of the paschal lamb.

Though we have no record of our Saviour's discourse to his disciples on the subject of the passover, yet we cannot doubt but that

like the Jews have done ever since, the prominent subject of discourse was the occasion upon which the passover had been instituted, (*Exod. xii. 24—27,*) and hence we may reasonably presume, that in view of the great doctrine of justification by faith so distinctly taught afterwards by the apostles, our Saviour shewed to his disciples, that as there could not be any inherent virtue in the mere blood of an animal sprinkled over the door, so the salvation of the first-born could only be referred to *the faith of the Jews, who as relying upon the promise of Jehovah, sprinkled their doors with blood,* in conformity to the revelation they had received.

After the ceremonies pertaining to the paschal supper had been finished, and in immediate view of his own death which was now close at hand, our Saviour gave a morsel of bread and a sip of wine to each of his disciples, with an express direction that they should for the future, from time to time commemorate his death by a similar observance. For this bread represents my body broken for you, and this wine my blood shed for you, for the remission (*i. e.* pardon) of sins. “This do,” says he, “*in remembrance of me.*”

The words of the several evangelists in mentioning the institution of the Lord’s supper, are all distinct and clear that its object was nothing more than a rite which was to remind them in future of what Christ had suffered on their account. If we add to this that Paul twenty-seven years after our Saviour’s ascension, when correcting an abuse of this institution, (*1 Cor. xi. 22,*) assigned no other object of the sacrament of the supper, than that those partaking of it “*shewed forth the Lord’s death till he come,*” it does appear passing strange how any person who reads the New Testament, can look upon the institution in any other light than *a commemoration,* as is expressly stated by evangelists and apostles.

Any embarrassment with Protestants at the present day who have not investigated this subject, can only arise from their supposing that the mode in which the sacrament of the Lord’s supper is now celebrated in our churches, is in strict conformity to the appointment of Christ. The case however is very different, our modes of celebration are the results of a wide departure from the original institution, and essentially have been derived from the practices of a corrupt theology, for the earlier ages of christian antiquity still bear their testimony against the corruption of later times.

As the manner in which the Lord’s supper was celebrated in the first three centuries, affords a much more powerful argument concerning the nature and object of the Lord’s supper, than any

etymological disquisition concerning the signification of the terms and phrases employed by the New Testament writers, we shall proceed to shew how the primitive christians commemorated the last supper of our Lord, by which many modern assumptions of theology on the subject will be sufficiently disproved, without the necessity of a formal confutation.

The christians of the first and second centuries who had no churches,* nor as we shall hereafter shew, had no clergy in the ordinary sense of that term, met at private houses or other convenient places of resort for purposes of edification or religious instruction, in a manner analogous to what is now done at an ordinary lay prayer meeting. From time to time they held in connection with these assemblies a common supper among the brotherhood, at which those who could afford it, brought provisions of meat and wine, and which thus constituted a frugal meal, of which all partook whether rich or poor; in this manner recognizing the equality of each other as members of the flock of Christ, and hence the term *communion* as implying the equality of brethren.

At these suppers called *Agapæ* or *love feasts*, they celebrated the last supper of our Lord and the benefits that resulted from his body having been broken and his blood having been shed for the salvation of mankind. Sometimes this commemoration preceded, and at other times followed the common meal of which we have spoken above. But whether before or after, is a matter of no importance.

According to our investigations on this subject, the ceremonial of the Lord's supper was as follows: The requisite amount of bread and wine to be employed for that purpose having been previously taken from the general provision made for the love feast, it was at the proper time laid on the table before the elders or leaders who presided at the meeting, one of whom having called the attention of those present to the subject by suitable remarks, then stood up and made a prayer to God, thanking him for all his mercies towards mankind, and in an especial manner for the salvation and remission of sins accomplished through the Lord Jesus Christ. Having made this prayer, the bread and wine was distributed by the dea-

* That is to say they had no buildings like our churches. This is evident from what Minucius Felix, Origen, Arnobius, Lactantius, &c. remark in their controversies with the heathens, that the christians had no temples or altars. But that they had places for assembling themselves together is undoubtedly, either at private houses, or large rooms, or even in humble edifices erected by themselves in like manner as the Jews built their synagogues.

cons who in their presentation to each individual said nothing more than this: “*the body of Christ: the blood of Christ.*” (See *Bingham Antiq. &c. lib. xv. chap. 5.*) After all had received the bread and wine, another prayer was offered to God, and the service was concluded.

I apprehend these particulars can be fully substantiated by a reference to the ecclesiastical writers of the second and third century, though their own practice already differed from the simple institution that I have stated above. This need not be wondered at as their practices ordinarily were continual innovations on the original simplicity of the Christian Dispensation, and which as concerned the Lord’s supper, were corrupted more and more in every succeeding age until they terminated in the establishment of the doctrine of transubstantiation.

Ecclesiastical writers of the third and fourth centuries inform us that great scandals arose in the church from these love feasts; that what Paul had censured the Corinthians for doing in his day, (1 *Cor. xi. 20—22.*) had taken place so generally, that the clergy who had then attained to great influence, gradually obtained the suppression of the love feasts throughout the christian world. This was a most unfortunate innovation, for as they were in strict conformity with the institution of Christ, so they had been expressly recognized as such by Paul in his reproof of the Corinthians as quoted above. If abuses and scandals had arisen by any mismanagement of christians in holding their love feasts, the clergy, or those having influence ought to have remedied them, which they could have done as in any other case of misconduct. I apprehend however the abuses charged on the love feasts, were the plea made use of to abolish them, rather than the real cause, and that the secret truth was, that they interfered with the exaltation of the clergy as *a priestly body*, to which assumption the ministers of religion had been sensibly tending from the middle of the second century. We cannot however enlarge upon that circumstance at present.

After the third century when christians had come into possession of temples or churches, it was a still further inducement to urge the suppression of the love feasts, as being observances that profaned buildings set apart for the worship of God by making them places for eating and drinking. As fasting had now become of great reputation among christians of these times, it doubtless seemed to them highly indecorous to eat or drink in the presence of that God, who according to their notions bestowed his favor especially

to those who every where else either fasted, or eat and drank no more than would sustain life.

In the suppression of the love feast, the following important changes took place respecting the mode of administering the Lord's supper. As there was no longer a common meal upon which the brethren supped, the ordinary table at which the Lord's supper had been previously commemorated, was necessarily withdrawn, and gradually an altar was substituted in its place, as more suitable to the exaggerated notions that had prevailed for some time concerning the elements of bread and wine, which after clerical consecration were supposed to acquire mysterious and sanctifying properties.

The suppression of the love feast, consequently gave rise to a new mode of distributing the bread and wine as the symbolical representations of the broken body and "shed blood of Christ. Formerly this had been done at the table at which the membership had partaken of the common meal of the love feast, and at which they either reclined or sat as at any ordinary meal. But as the table had been superceded by an altar, the position for receiving the sacrament of the supper was necessarily changed. For some time the communicants walked to the altar, and there standing, received the elements from the elder, for the canons of the church at these times expressly forbade that any one should kneel even in prayer on sundays and other festival days. But as the doctrine of the mystic presence of Christ in the emblems of his body and blood was strongly developing itself, a few years only were necessary to supercede the canons forbidding kneeling, and the christian world soon settled down on the principle that the only reverent posture to receive the mystic symbols of Christ's body and blood, was in the humble position of bended knees.

The primitive christians having thus entirely perverted the institution of the commemoration of Christ's last supper, it was finally consummated in its corruption by the invention of the doctrine of transubstantiation, and the whole subject thus elaborated prevailed in the Catholic church down to the time of the Reformation.

The first Protestant reformers came out of the Catholic church deeply imbued with the notions they had received by their previous theological training. They had in fact only revolted from the authority of the pope, for they still held the doctrine of a Holy Catholic Church, and maintained with but slight modifications most of the dogmas and institutions they had received from the Catholics. Thus with respect to the communion of the Lord's supper, Luther

taught what he called consubstantiation, and Calvin advocated the real presence. (*Instit. lib. iv. chap. 17.*) The Church of England from which our American churches more immediately sprung, expressly made their ceremonial respecting the administration of the Lord's supper to favor the doctrine of the real presence, so that the Catholics might be induced to conform to the English church. (See *Burnet, Reform. part ii. lib. 3.*) Zwingli, the Swiss reformer, under much obloquy alone taught the true doctrine on the subject, that it was merely commemorative.

Having now given a brief history of the institution of the Lord's supper, the manner in which it was originally celebrated by the primitive christians, and the innovation by which the old mode was set aside by a new device, we shall now be enabled to discuss with greater advantage those texts of Scripture which instruct us as to the true nature and purpose of the sacrament of the Lord's supper.

The evangelists and apostles, as far as they speak expressly concerning this institution, distinctly inform us that it was to be done *in remembrance* of Christ, whose body had been broken and his blood shed for the remission of sins. They do not give us a hint of any other signification, and hence it is wholly unwarrantable to attach any meaning to the ceremonial, as implying a hidden or mysterious operation upon those partaking of this sacrament.

Yet as a memorial of Christ and what he had done for mankind, the institution suggested to his first disciples who were Jews, some striking and apposite considerations, which persons ignorant of Jewish institutions do not now appreciate, but in which the true character of the Lord's supper is very distinctly exhibited.

When a Jew made a peace offering, or sacrifice to Jehovah for mercies or benefits received, a part only of the sacrifice was consumed on the altar, the priest took the right shoulder for his perquisite, and the remainder of the animal after having been heaved or waved before the altar, was then returned to the person making the sacrifice, who carried it home and feasted on it together with such friends as he invited to the entertainment.

Now Christ instituted the sacrament of the supper on the analogy of this very theory so familiar to the Jews. To remind his disciples for the future of the great principle involved in his advent or incarnation, he directed that small portions of mere bread and wine should be eaten by them as symbolical of a *sacrificial feast* that referred to his *death* for the benefit of mankind.

As the action thus signified an object that had been accomplished, nothing could more plainly remind the disciples of the purport of

Christ's death whenever they partook of these intelligible emblems, for they merely represented through a symbolic action, what they as Jews had been ever accustomed to do in a sensible form with the sacrificed animal. I presume no one after this explanation will find any difficulty in comprehending the full meaning of our expression, that the sacrament of the Lord's supper is simply a commemoration of the fact of his death for the remission of sins. It is a ceremony that is to bring the subject to our minds, and to shew forth the object of the Lord's death until he shall come again.

In the celebration of the love feast,—at which time only the primitive christians originally commemorated the last supper of our Lord, under the circumstances connected with the common meal that either preceded or followed the commemoration,—we have abundant reason to infer that the rite was unaccompanied by any of those peculiar ecclesiastical acts, which are now used by our clergy in what they call consecrating the elements, as being essential to the administration of the Lord's supper. The primitive christians appear to have simply followed the example of Christ, who after supper having given God thanks for his mercies, then took bread and wine and gave them to his disciples, without any consecration of them as ordinarily supposed and practiced.

This notion of a consecration, which the Protestants retained from the practice of the Catholics before the Reformation, as far as the New Testament is concerned, is only sustained by the improper manner in which the gospel of Matthew, chap. xxvi. 26, is rendered in our English version, which represents Christ to have taken bread and to have blessed *it*, (*i. e.* the bread.) But there is nothing to justify such translation; it ought to have been rendered, “*And while they were eating, Jesus on taking bread and on giving thanks, broke and gave to the disciples, and said take eat,*” &c.

The English version of this text is wholly unjustifiable, for if the translators chose to express the literal phraseology of the Jews in giving thanks, which was ordinarily done by “*blessing God*,” they ought to have added the word *God*, which would have prevented any misapprehension, but they have most improperly added the word *it*, which though in italics to shew that it is not in the text, is a matter overlooked by the English reader as if it was essential to the significance of the word *blessed*, which however as before observed is a very unjustifiable rendering of the Greek text.*

* The translators of the Douay or Catholic Bible have been more honest than those of our English version, for they have rendered the passage literally from the Vulgate, “*Jesus took bread and blessed and broke*,” &c. Nevertheless the rendering

This correction of our English translation involves some very important consequences, for by shewing the true meaning of the text, we wholly get rid of those fanciful inferences which theologians have deduced from the supposition that Christ consecrated the bread and wine of the supper, and which from such supposed consecration it is inferred they acquire mystical and sanctifying properties, and which even among Protestants that do not recognize the real presence, are spoken of as being “food for the soul, communion with God, renewal of our covenant obligations,” &c. all of which are unwarrantable inferences; for the object of the institution was to no such purposes, but was only appointed according to the express word of Christ to be done *in remembrance* of him.

This circumstance has been strongly urged by Bishop Hoadly in his discourse on the Lord’s supper, and from which he correctly infers that there can be no spiritual efficacy in its reception, since from the fact of its institution it was to be observed *in remembrance*, and not in view of any *present advantage*. If it conferred grace or sanctification to the person receiving it, it would be absurd to institute it as a remembrance of *something past*.

in either case is faulty, for the true sense of the passage is that Christ having thanked God for all his mercies, then proceeded to break the bread, &c. That the Greek words $\varepsilon\nu\lambda\circ\gamma\epsilon\omega$ and $\varepsilon\nu\chi\alpha\gamma\iota\circ\gamma\epsilon\omega$ are mere synonyms as expressing thankfulness, is evident from their interchangeable use by the different evangelists in describing the institution of the Lord’s supper.

But any doubtfulness as to the meaning of the word *bless*, will be removed by an investigation of Jewish customs. Their form, in saying grace, or in other acknowledgments of God’s mercies and goodness, is invariably “Blessed art thou O God for these thy mercies,” &c. The reader who will examine Lightfoot (*Works* ix. chap. 13) on the ritual of the Jewish passover, at which feast our Lord instituted *his supper*, will find these words continually repeated. But even in the Old Testament the phraseology is sufficiently discernable, as any English reader may see by examining Cruden’s Concordance under the head of *bless* and *blessed*.

There therefore can be no doubt as to what was done by our Saviour. He blessed God and he did not bless the bread any more than the wine; but he thanked God for his mercies, both when he took the bread in his hands and when he took up the cup of wine.

That our Saviour did not consecrate the bread and wine of his last supper is no new doctrine of mine; the ever memorable Hales of Eaton, of the Church of England, (*Works* i. 53,) made a similar observation two hundred years ago. “They suppose,” says he, “that upon the pronouncing of those words, (*i. e.* of consecration) something befalls that action which otherwise would not, and that without those words the action were lame. Sir, I must confess my ignorance unto you. I find no ground for the necessity of thus doing. Our Saviour instituting that holy ceremony commands us to do what he did, leaves us no precept of saying any words; neither will it be made appear that either the blessed apostles or primitive christians had any such custom; nay the contrary will be made probably to appear, out of some of the ancientest writings of the church’s ceremonials.”

I trust no one will be absurd enough to say, that no man has a right to assert that a devout person does not receive grace by a humble participation in an institution appointed by Christ. We cannot undertake to say what God does or may not do where he has made no revelation, but this we say that the New Testament writers do not ascribe any grace or spiritual benefit to a partaking of the Lord's supper, and those who assert the contrary to this, are not to require us to disprove their assumption, they must prove their doctrine to be the plain teaching of the Scripture.

The abolition of the love feast was attended with a great innovation concerning the discipline that had hitherto prevailed in christian congregations. Previously, as every member attended the love feast as the common assemblage of the brotherhood, so if any one had transgressed against morality, or any principle involving a violation of christian doctrine or propriety, he was renounced as a brother, in other words was excommunicated, *i. e.* expelled from christian society. He consequently no longer consorted with the brotherhood, nor joined them in their love feasts, where the Lord's supper was only administered.

But after the love feasts were abolished, the exclusion of a disorderly brother became the act of the clergy, who gave the term *excommunicated* a new signification as if implying one under the curse of God, and in the utmost peril of his soul. At the same time also they would not allow such persons to partake of the sacrament of the Lord's supper, as being unworthy of such a privilege. This was an utter innovation on the original principle of excommunication, which simply excluded an offender from intercourse with other christians as being an individual unworthy of the christian name. He was of course as such excluded from the commemoration of the Lord's supper, because he was not admitted to the love feast.

But the clergy were altogether inconsistent in their proceeding, for holding the sacrament of the Lord's supper to be a means of grace, it was unjustifiable to forbid any one to partake of it who presented himself in a reverent and becoming manner at the church altar. For if the sacrament be a mean of grace, it was most reasonable that the individual, necessarily penitent in the act, should be entitled to avail himself of an institution which according to their own theory had been so appointed by Christ. This inconsistency is still observed among many Protestants who have superstitious notions concerning the sacrament of the supper. They willingly dispense it to the pure and the holy, but if a man is not

as righteous as they think he ought to be, they then forbid him to partake of it.*

Many Protestants are sensible of the inconsistency of their conduct in this particular, but are exceedingly perplexed how to dispose of the subject. Their embarrassment is incapable of solution under the ordinary opinions concerning the nature and purport of the institution of the Lord's supper. The cause of the whole perplexity is in the fact of having dispensed with the love feast, to which the commemoration of the Lord's supper was originally attached. By setting aside the love feast, the Lord's supper gradually became a priestly act, and as such will ever be anomalous to the principles involved in its original institution. If Christians therefore desire to conduct this sacrament as Christ appointed it, they must revive the love feast in its original institutions, and then all things will be unattended with any perplexity.

After the observations I have made, and the statements I have given, it would be needless to express myself concerning the modes in which the Lord's supper is commemorated among Protestants at the present time. I therefore leave the subject to their own consideration.

The reader who may desire a more complete view of the object and nature of the Lord's supper will find much instruction on the subject in Cudworth's "True notion of the Lord's supper," commonly bound up with his great work on the Intellectual System of the Universe. Also in Warburton's Tracts, pp. 171, &c. and in Bishop Hoadly's Plain Account of the Sacrament, &c. vol. iii. 843. These treatises however, notwithstanding their great value as

* In A. D. 1645 when it was proposed in the English Parliament to empower the clergy of the New Establishment to exercise with no other control than their own discretion, the ecclesiastical punishment of excommunication and suspension from the sacrament, the celebrated John Selden so ably opposed the proposition that Parliament refused to confer upon the clergy such judicial powers.

"Selden in the course of his argument against the measure, observed, that for 4000 years there was no sign of any laws to suspend persons from the performance of their religious exercises. Under the Mosaic Dispensation every sinner was especially directed to offer his sacrifices, *because he was a sinner*, and no priest or other authority had power to restrain him, unless his impenitence could be shewn, which was difficult to be done. It is true that strangers were forbidden the pass-over, but they were Pagans, and this is not to the question, but whether Protestants are to be kept from the sacrament or other part of Protestant worship. No divine can shew that for this there is any command. The passage in Scripture that is quoted, &c. "put away from among you that wicked person," (1 Cor. v. 13) is a corruption of the Greek, it should be *το πονηρον put away that evil from you.* There is a new edition of Theodoret published that has this correctly," &c. (*Memoirs of John Selden*, by Johnson, 121, 122.)

exposing certain misjudgments on the subject are all defective in the fact, that they have overlooked the love feast to which the sacrament strictly pertained, and in consequence their views are all defective in the important circumstance of that omission.

INVESTIGATION CONCERNING THE CONSTITUTION AND ORGANIZATION OF THE FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.

WE have already exhibited to our readers, in our discourse upon the prophetic as well as the literal history of Jesus Christ, that one important part of his function as the Messiah was to lay the foundations of a kingdom upon the earth, of which he was to be the sovereign. Jesus Christ however merely commenced this work, and left its further development to the agencies of his apostles and disciples, who were instructed to invite all nations of men to become subjects or citizens of his spiritual kingdom, as contemplating the benefits resulting from such citizenship. But, instead of calling such persons subjects or citizens, Christ in the first place, and his disciples afterwards, designated them as being his church, or members of his church, which terms however are really only synonymous with those of subjects or citizens, for in the original and true sense of the word church, it merely signifies the whole body of believers in Jesus of Nazareth as being the Messiah.

The term church in this comprehensive sense was perfectly familiar to the Jews, as may be seen every where throughout the Old Testament, which speaks of the *congregation of Israel*, or elliptically *the congregation*, as designating the whole body of the Jewish people, and which was strictly founded on the fact, that all who entered into covenant with Jehovah by the rite of circumcision, thus became members of the congregation of Israel. Any large concordance will abundantly shew the proper sense in which the words church and congregation are to be understood.

In like manner as with the Jews, all those who were baptized into the religious system established by Jesus Christ, became through their faith in him, members of his congregation or church, *i. e.* as subjects or citizens they were henceforth entitled to all the privileges belonging to such citizenship.

Though Jesus Christ laid the foundations of his church, or as it is otherwise designated the kingdom of heaven, or of God, yet his personal ministry was not so much directed to obtain subjects as to the fulfilment of more important objects, and in laying down the principles by which his subjects were to regulate themselves in the discharge of their duties. But when he had accomplished what he had come to perform, and just before he ascended to heaven, he then charged the disciples he had made during his ministry, to go forth and proselyte disciples or subjects for his kingdom, "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," and encouraging them to this work by promising to be with them in a miraculously helping manner until the "end of the *AGE*," (*Math. xxviii. 20,*) and not as it is incorrectly rendered in our Bibles, "unto the end of the *world*."

That Jesus Christ here gave an express commandment to his disciples to go forth and proselyte all men to the system in which they had been instructed by him, is so evident, that no paraphrase of his words can render it plainer. But a question of great importance is involved in the correct comprehension of the direction given by our Saviour, whether this commandment was addressed to his apostles and disciples as a duty pertaining to them merely as individuals, or whether it was given as a commission to them as being a divine corporation of ministers, set apart under a special ecclesiastical organization.

Nearly all theologians have interpreted our Saviour's words to signify that he gave a special commission to the apostles as an ecclesiastical corporation, who as such were henceforth to preside over the whole body of christian believers, and as such had authority to expound the principles of the christian faith; to administer certain ordinances now called sacraments, and to ordain other persons to the exercise of peculiar functions, which by successive ordinations should continue them as an ecclesiastical corporation until the literal ending of the world.

This notion however of a divinely appointed clergy, or body of ecclesiastics, is opposed in the first instance by the remarkable circumstance, that the apostles have not recognized the existence of any such corporation in any part of the New Testament. There is no plan for the organization of a clerical body laid down anywhere in the apostolic writings, nor rules given by which they should be regulated. Neither is there a word said concerning their supposed peculiar functions. These remarkable omissions therefore fully justify the conclusion that no corporation of ministers of

the gospel could have been contemplated by our Saviour as an institution pertaining to the Christian Dispensation.

Hence in warning his disciples against the false prophets (teachers) who would in after time appear among them, he gave them no other instruction by which the character of these false teachers was to be determined, but by judging of them according to *their fruits.* (*Math. vii. 15—23.*) Such a rule is manifestly opposed to any notion of a divinely commissioned body of clergy, for if such an institution had been recognized by Christ, he would assuredly have referred his disciples at once to some specific test, and not have left the subject to be determined by the mere inferences of their private judgment.

The doctrine of a divinely commissioned clergy is furthermore opposed by insuperable objections as regards the exercise of the peculiar functions ascribed to such supposed divine organization.

A divinely appointed corporation, who by successive ordinations among themselves should preserve such an institution throughout all generations of christians, could only contemplate two objects, *first*, that they were to teach men by divine authority what were the true principles of christian faith and practice, and *secondly*, that they should administer the sacraments as possessing an efficacy in the fact of their clerical administration.

But neither of these suppositions can bear a moment's examination. In the first place, it is evident that if an authoritative teaching of the doctrines of Christianity has been conferred on the clergy, then every individual clergyman *must be infallible in what he teaches*, for if not infallible, to what end is a divine commission given? It is a manifest absurdity to suppose that Christ should have set men apart to teach others by a divine commission, when at the same time as being fallible they might through personal infirmity abuse their divine commission, and thus establish error or false doctrine with authority. It is therefore essential to a divine commission to teach other men, that the teachers themselves should be individually preserved from all error.

This dilemma was not perceived in the primitive church until after they had recognized the doctrine that the clergy exercised their functions upon a divine commission, and the expedient to which they resorted to sustain their assumption, was to claim this infallibility for the church as an assembly of clergymen consecrated to God, and whose deliberations as such, it was assumed that the Holy Spirit would not only preserve from error, but that it would furthermore lead them to the discernment of all truth.

But it is not enough that the church, in the abstract, is supposed to be always under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, or in other words that it is infallible, as is maintained by the Catholics. We contend, that if the clergy have a divine commission to teach, *every ecclesiastic* must be infallible, for otherwise their individual teaching may lead their hearers into all manner of error. What does it signify that the church abstractedly be infallible, when influential clergymen are the cause of leading thousands into heresy. Arius was an ecclesiastic, Nestorius was a bishop, Eutychus and Pelagius were ecclesiastics, and yet by their preaching they induced thousands of men to adopt their peculiar opinions, which the greater portion of the clergy now consider to be heresies of the most dangerous kind. To say that these individuals ought to have submitted to the church is to no purpose, for they did not submit, and thousands of men followed their teaching.

If every clergyman is not infallible it is perfectly nugatory to assert the existence of a divinely commissioned body of clergy, for we have no possible means of determining whether individual ecclesiastics are led by the Spirit of God or not. The supposition that a majority of them when assembled in a council, will be guided into infallibility by the Holy Spirit, is utterly absurd; for we have no promise of God concerning such assemblies, and our whole experience is sufficient to convince us that truth is not to be determined by majorities. Our Saviour and his disciples were a minority, Luther and the Reformers were a minority, and so with others since.* But the thing itself is so self-evident that we need not attempt to prove it.

It is therefore seemingly incredible that Christ could have contemplated the establishment of any organized body of clergy as possessing a divine commission to teach, for not only is no such doctrine taught in the Scriptures, but all the phenomena of ecclesiastical history are utterly irreconcilable to such an hypothesis.

Thus for instance, I defy the whole body of christian ecclesiastics, Catholic and Protestant together, to tell us whether a differing reading of the Samaritan, the Hebrew, or the Septuagint, is the

* On this subject of christian truth being determined by a majority of votes, nothing can be more pertinent than the observation of "ever memorable Hales." (*Works* i. 66.) "It was never heard in any profession that the conclusion of truth went by plurality of voices, *the christian profession only excepted*: and I have often mused how it comes to pass, that the way which in all other sciences is not able to warrant the poorest conclusion, should be thought sufficient to give authority to conclusions in divinity, the supreme empress of sciences."

true reading. I challenge them to tell us whether any disputed text is true Scripture or not, otherwise than as based upon the investigations of commentators and critics who claim no inspiration for their labors. Shall we then allow ecclesiastics to tell us they have a commission to expound the sense of the Scripture to us, when they cannot tell whether it is Scripture or not?

If Christ had constituted his church as an ecclesiastical corporation, we should have always found the clergy united in harmonious operation and opposing an undivided front to the irreligious world. Sects and heresies therefore ought to have originated only among laymen, or persons out of the clergy, whereas the very reverse is the case, for heresies and schisms have originated essentially with the clergy only.

The slightest acquaintance with ecclesiastical history abundantly informs us, that in all times since the advent, there has been a great amount of disputes and heresies among the clergy, which it has been impossible to control or counteract by any expedient that the rulers of the church could adopt. Councils or assemblies of clergymen have for centuries been working on this subject, but yet have never advanced any further in the disposition of the matter than to decide on the subject of controverted doctrines by a majority of votes. But such action as this is preposterous, if clergymen had a divine commission, and consequently as such influenced by the Holy Spirit, there could be no differences of opinion among them. Every where as individuals they would have inculcated the same principles of truth. Hence the very fact of councils or assemblies of clergymen to determine what is true christian doctrine, is *ipso facto* proof that they have not been authorized by Jehovah to teach mankind with authority.*

* The notion that our modern clergy have any right to expound the Scriptures *authoritatively* is so utterly fallacious, that even Mr. Froude notwithstanding his high church prejudices respecting the *priestly character* of the clergy of the church of England, has yet argued against their assumption to interpret the Scriptures with authority, in language fully as explicit as I have done. His words are as follow: (*Remains, &c.* i. 403.)

"The Tracts," (i. e. the Oxford,) "talk a great deal about the clergy *teaching authoritatively*. Do you think that on any fair principles of interpretation, the texts which claim authority for the teaching of inspired persons, and those in immediate communication with them, can be applied to the teaching of those who have no access to any source of information which is not equally open to all mankind? Surely no teaching now-a-days is authoritative in the sense in which the apostles' was, *except that of the Bible*; nor any in the sense in which Timothy's was, except that of primitive tradition. To find a sense in which the teaching of the modern clergy is *authoritative*, I confess baffles me. Do you mean that if his

That our Saviour could not have contemplated the appointment of a body of persons as a clergy or ministers of the gospel to teach with authority, is furthermore distinctly inferrible from what he said to his disciples, (*Math. xxiii. 7—10,*) “But be not ye called Rabbi, *for one is your teacher or instructor, even Christ, and all ye are brethren.* And call no man *your father*, upon earth, for one is your father which is in heaven. Neither be ye called *masters*, for one is your master even Christ.”*

Now if none of Christ’s disciples were to be saluted with appellations which signify learned men, teachers, or instructors, can any thing be more evident than that no class of persons could have been constituted by Christ to exercise such functions by a divine commission. Is it possible for words to bear a more direct testimony against a divinely constituted body of teachers than the circumstance, that the very words that imply the necessary superiority of such teachers, are positively forbidden to be used.†

lordship of ——” (some bishop) “taught one way, and Pascal or Robert Nelson another, the former would be entitled to most consideration? Or do you only give the preference to ordained persons *ceteris paribus*? The former assertion would be startling—the latter does not come to much.”

* As I think it very important that the reader should be deeply impressed with these words of Christ, I call his attention to them by the following analysis.

“BE YE NOT CALLED RABBI.” This term means learned man, and more especially teacher, as it is stated *John i. 38*, “*rabbi*, which is to say, being interpreted, *teacher*” (*διδασκαλε*.)

“FOR ONE IS YOUR *leader*, (*καθηγητης*) EVEN CHRIST, AND ALL YE ARE BRETHREN.” The word *καθηγητης* signifies *leader, conductor, or guide*. In our common translation it was formerly well expressed by the term *master*, but of which we have now no proper apprehension unless in its partial application to a *schoolmaster*.

“AND CALL NO MAN YOUR FATHER UPON THE EARTH, FOR ONE IS YOUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN. The word *Father* was applied by the Jews to that individual rabbi or teacher to whose spiritual guidance they especially submitted themselves, though it also was applied as a term of respect to any elderly rabbi of reputation.

NEITHER BE YE CALLED *masters*, (*καθηγηται*) FOR ONE IS YOUR *MASTER* (*καθηγητης*) EVEN CHRIST. This term we have already interpreted above as signifying *leader, conductor, or guide*.

Here then we have the most positive prohibition on the part of Christ himself, against any of his disciples assuming the character of being teachers or instructors *by authority*, for that it is only in this sense that the terms are reprobated is evident, since Christ and the apostles distinctly recognize certain of their followers to be teachers and instructors of others. Hence they were only to teach and instruct by communicating the knowledge they had acquired, just in like manner as any layman in our day instructs any other layman in the principles of religious truth as he has learned them.

† There is a single passage in our English translation of the New Testament that to an ordinary reader might seem to recognize authority as being vested in a minister of the gospel. This is in *Titus ii. 15*, “rebuke with all *authority*.” Though

If it then be incredible that Christ could have constituted a body of clergymen to teach mankind by a divine commission, it is more incredible to suppose that he has instituted such a body merely to administer sacraments as communicating grace: for there is not a single passage in the whole New Testament that specifies what individuals are to administer the sacraments. And in further opposition to all theological assumptions on the subject, the New Testament writers no where recognize the sacraments to be *means of grace*, as we have already urged in our preceding chapter. Indeed such a notion is directly contradicted by the doctrine of christian adoption; see Vol. II. 85, &c. where we have shewn that in consequence of what our Saviour had accomplished for the salvation of mankind, he was authorized in virtue of that obedience to introduce into his father's household all that would seek that privilege from him. Hence all who do acknowledge him as their Redeemer are by adoption made children of God, with full right as such to come to Jehovah through Jesus Christ, and obtain from him as their FATHER, all things necessary to them whether temporal or spiritual. Jehovah therefore having authorized an immediate communication with himself on the part of all true christians, with the promise of answering their prayer on all subjects whatever, it follows necessarily that no clerical agencies can be essential to communion with him. If every man, by his own prayer, can obtain whatever grace Jehovah deems suitable to bestow upon those who seek his favor, what more can he promise or what more can man require.

If then the ministers of the gospel have no divine commission to teach mankind with authority, nor to administer sacraments as *opera operata*, how can we suppose that such a body of men were ever constituted by Christ as a corporation with powers to continue themselves to the end of the world? The error of mankind on this subject originally proceeded from a gross corruption of christian simplicity, which has been maintained ever since by false constructions put upon certain passages in the New Testament

this is the only place in which the Greek word $\epsilon\pi\iota\tau\alpha\gamma\eta$ is thus rendered, I think our translators have given its meaning correctly. But the authority thus referred to, is simply that of Titus being fully qualified to speak with a full knowledge of the doctrines that constituted Paul's teaching; and not from any *ex officio* authority pertaining to him as being a minister of the gospel. If Paul had intended to convey any such idea as that, he would have used the word $\epsilon\zeta\sigma\tau\alpha\zeta$, which is the term always employed in the New Testament to express authority as founded on official position. This any one can ascertain who examines a Greek Concordance of the New Testament.

respecting those persons recognized by the apostles as teachers or exhorters in the religious assemblies of the converts they had made, but who were simply laymen who acted according to the abilities or gifts they individually possessed, as we shall abundantly shew in the progress of our work.

But though the theory of the Scripture is most distinctly opposed to the institution of a clergy as a body of men who bear a divine commission, yet human prejudices have been so long established in favor of such an hypothesis, that the vast majority of Protestants as well as Catholics hold no doctrine to be more certain.

Though we have in our preceding exposition fully confuted such an opinion, yet to make it still more conclusive and satisfactory, we shall investigate the subject as it is involved in the interpretations put upon those passages of the New Testament advanced to sustain such a doctrine, but which we will undertake to shew do thoroughly prove a condition of things altogether different from the ordinary expositions given on this important matter.

This doctrine concerning the divine authority and functions of the ministers of the gospel, was promulgated in Christendom long before the rise of the Bishop of Rome to universal authority, and of itself led inevitably to such a result. For, as it was universally conceded during the fourth and fifth centuries that Christ had established the clergy as an ecclesiastical corporation under the superintendence of the apostles, so they also inferred from certain passages of Scripture that Peter had been constituted the head of the apostolic body, and consequently when the Bishop of Rome claimed to be Peter's successor, the doctrine of papal supremacy as the head of the whole christian clergy as a divinely commissioned body of men, was so consistent with such a constitution of things, that it ultimately prevailed throughout the whole Western Empire by the inherent strength of such inferences.

Though the Protestants from the time of the Reformation have rejected the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome as the successor of the apostle Peter, they appear to have never doubted that Christ constituted the apostles an ecclesiastical corporation, with authority to ordain other persons as members of this body, and consequently that all ecclesiastical functions necessarily pertain to the ministers of the gospel by the express appointment of Christ, and cannot lawfully be exercised by any other than ecclesiastically ordained persons. The Protestants therefore only differ essentially from the Church of Rome respecting the supremacy of the pope, and in cer-

tain particulars concerning the powers of the bishops, or their identity in point of rank with presbyters. I apprehend however there is a much more important point to be determined on the general subject than has hitherto been properly investigated; *viz.* is it an undoubted fact that Christ did constitute the apostles an ecclesiastical corporation. The determination of this question involves the most serious consequences, for all the claims of the clergy as a body of men consecrated by a divine appointment to perform certain functions, rests ultimately on the fact whether the apostles themselves were a corporation: for unless they were so constituted they could not convey corporate powers to persons who succeeded them in point of time. Now every important passage that is quoted from the New Testament as implying commission, authority, or power to the clergy or ministers of the gospel, has been deduced from words addressed expressly to the apostles. But no one has a right to apply to the clergy at large words spoken by Christ specially to his apostles, unless they can also shew that the apostles were a corporation, and that as such, they communicated the powers or authority they themselves had received.*

That Christ gave certain powers to his twelve apostles as individuals, to commence the great work of proselyting mankind, is evident from the New Testament, but that he appointed them in any sense an ecclesiastical corporation with powers to confer a corporate authority upon those they might ordain to the ministerial function, is a doctrine that we cannot admit to be taught in the Scripture.

In the first place, there is not a passage in the New Testament that either speaks of, or implies any corporate action of the apostles as a distinct body.

Secondly. That there could have been no organization of the apostles as a corporation, is evident from the statement made by Paul, who expressly tells us, (*Gal. i 15, &c.*) that after his miraculous call to the apostleship, he held no conference whatever with those who were apostles before him, but went as a mere individual into Arabia on the work of his ministry; and not until three years after did he go up to Jerusalem, where he conferred with Peter

*The term apostle was not one devised by our Saviour, it was of known use and signification among the Jews at this very time, and essentially signified a legate or ambassador entrusted with a particular mission. This term was appropriated by the Jews to certain persons who were confidential ministers of the high priest, and who were occasionally invested with particular powers and dispatched on missions of importance, principally to such of their countrymen as resided in foreign parts. See *Mosheim, Comment. Affairs Christ. &c.* i. 120—note.

singly, and merely mentions having seen James only of all the other apostles.

Thirdly. Neither did the other apostles know during these three years, that Christ had appointed Paul an apostle with them, for it is stated expressly, in *Acts* ix. 26, 27, that when Paul first went up to Jerusalem and "assayed to join himself with the disciples," they were all afraid of him, not believing him to be even a convert to Christianity, until Barnabas brought him to the other apostles, who could only have been Peter and James as stated above, and then declared to them that the Lord Jesus had spoken to Paul and that he had afterwards preached boldly in his name. It seems incredible therefore that the apostles were a corporation when they did not know for three years so eminent a member of their body.

A further series of arguments against the theory of an apostolic corporation may be derived from the manifestly independent action of the several apostles as so many different individuals. Thus Paul tells us, (*Gal.* ii. 2, 6—9,) that fourteen years after his conversion, when he went up to Jerusalem, he only held a private discourse with some of the more eminent of the apostles concerning the doctrines he preached among the Gentiles, &c. He then adds, that when the other apostles saw that the gospel to the heathen was committed to him, as the gospel of the Jews was to Peter, (*i. e.* by the evident intention of Christ) they gave him the right hand of fellowship, &c. and then they severally departed on the work of their ministry as mere individuals unconnected with any corporate dependence on each other.

In further support of this view of the individual action of the different apostles, we remark that Paul in the greater number of his epistles associates with himself in the address, Timothy, Sylvanus, or Sosthenes, who were his ordinary attendants on his missionary excursions. In other epistles he writes in his own name, and never uses any expression as implying the concurrent authority of an apostolic corporation. It is the same with Peter, James and John, they each write as individuals only. These facts are altogether inconsistent with the hypothesis that the apostles constituted a corporation.

But we can place our objections to the common notions on this subject in a still stronger light, by shewing from the clearest inferences, that notwithstanding the plausibility of the assumptions that have been inferred from *Acts* i. 3, &c. that Christ, neither at that time, nor on any other occasion, could have possibly given the apostles any direct or explicit instructions, whereby they could have

determined by corporate authority either the faith or practice of the general body of christian believers.

Thus for instance, Christ could not have given them any instruction as to what order of things they were to establish among the Gentile nations, for it is abundantly clear that the apostles did not even comprehend they were to preach to the heathen, until *ten or eleven years after Christ's ascension*, when Peter had his vision and interview with Cornelius as related in *Acts x.* and for which intercourse with a Gentile, he was actually censured by his christian brethren, (*Acts xi. 3*) until he justified himself by relating the whole circumstance, and the miraculous testimony of the Holy Spirit that ensued.

As the apostles were thus evidently without any express instructions concerning the Gentiles, so we can shew it to have been the same case as regarded the Jewish people; for it is evident that Christ could not have taught the apostles in positive terms, that they were to dispense with the observance of the Mosaic institutions concerning *circumcision*, and the use of clean or unclean food, for if he had thus instructed them they never would have held a conference *twenty-two years after the ascension*, to determine this matter among themselves. (*Acts xv.*) Surely if Christ had left them any systematic instructions respecting ecclesiastical institutions or observances, they would have said so at once, instead of making this subject a matter of debate upon which the sense of the whole church membership was literally taken.

A still stronger proof that Christ could not have given the apostles any formal instruction as to any peculiar organization of the christian church, is evident in the fact, that *thirty years after the ascension*, the apostles and the whole church at Jerusalem were unaware that the Mosaic institutions had been abrogated by the coming of Jesus Christ. Paul in his individual capacity had correctly inferred this, but the others had not, for when he made his last visit to Jerusalem, (*Acts xxi. 20*.) the "*apostle James and all the elders*" informed him that the christian society there had heard that he (Paul) had taught the Jews among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, &c. But said they, as you perceive there "*are many thousands of the Jews that believe*," (i. e. who are christians,) "*who are all zealous for the law*," (i. e. for the observance of the law of Moses,) therefore to induce them to understand that the report they have heard concerning your teaching is unfounded, "*and that thou thyself walkest orderly and keepest the law*," now be at the expense of purifying four of our christian brethren who

have taken a (Nazarite) vow upon them according to the law of Moses, &c.

From this statement it is abundantly clear that no constitution or organization of the christian church had been previously appointed by Christ, for had such been the case it is utterly incredible that the apostles, James our Lord's brother, and the whole body of christians at Jerusalem, should persist in a zealous observance of the institutions of Moses, instead of adopting the system that our clergy assume Christ himself had appointed at least thirty years before this time.

The notion therefore that Christ established a formal constitution for his chureh, which was to be carried out into effectual operation by an organized clergy, possessing those peculiar ecclesiastical powers that the great body of professing christians presume was conferred upon them, is totally irreconcilable with the statements made above; which shew the apostles themselves were wholly uninstructed as to the extensive character of the christian dispensation, beyond proclaiming to the world as mere witnesses what they had heard or seen respecting the personal ministry and history of Christ. It therefore follows conclusively, that any communications made by Christ to the apostles, whether before or after his resurrection, could only have been directed to the establishment in their minds of certain particulars concerning himself as being the Messiah, which they were to testify to mankind, as is indeed plainly intimated in *Acts* i. 8, “*ye shall be witnesses unto me;*” &c. but which instruction was wholly unaccompanied by any special enactments or directions as to the mode by which they were to dispose of those who should be the converts of their future ministry.*

It may however be insisted upon that the apostles were an ecclesiastical corporation from the fact, that they filled up the vacancy that occurred in their body from the defection of Judas Iscariot, by the election of Matthias, as is related in *Acts* i. 15—26.

* This fact is perfectly clear from the New Testament, for what Christ's instructions to his disciples were after the resurrection is plainly stated in *Luke* xxiv. 45—48.

“Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, (i. e. of the Old Testament,) and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And *ye are witnesses of these things:*” i. e. these are the matters which you are to preach to the world, as things you have been personally instructed in by me, or have witnessed concerning me.

In order to properly estimate this transaction, let us consider all the circumstances connected with it. Jesus Christ at his last interview with his apostles and disciples, (*Acts i. 4, 5,*) left a positive command to them, "that they should not depart from Jerusalem," (*i. e.* that they should not immediately enter on their ministry,) "but wait for the promise of the Father," (*i. e.* the influences of the Holy Spirit,) "which, said he, ye have heard from me, for ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." But instead of waiting until they had received this promised influence, as soon as they returned to Jerusalem Peter stood up among the one hundred and twenty *disciples*, and after expounding a passage in the Psalms that predicted the apostacy of Judas and that another person should take his office, he then proposed to them, that *they*, *i. e.* the one hundred and twenty *disciples*, and *not the apostles exclusively*, should appoint a person from among themselves in the place of Judas. This proposition having been assented to, they then selected two persons whom they deemed to be suitable, and after having prayed that the Lord would determine which of the two was to be chosen, they then drew lots; and though one of the two must necessarily be elected under such an arrangement, yet as the lot fell on Matthias they then presumptuously concluded that he had the divine approbation, and was consequently numbered by them "among the eleven apostles." This election however was made by the whole body of disciples, and not by the apostles exclusively, and therefore they cannot be said to have filled up the vacancy themselves.

That this election was presumptuous is evident from the very relation. It was made prior to the descent of the Holy Spirit, and was unattended by any manifestation whatever of divine approbation.* But we have further a conclusive proof against the validity of the election of Matthias, in the fact that Christ himself afterwards selected Paul for the vacant apostleship by a direct and supernatural appointment.

It would be superfluous to say any thing as to the manner in which Paul fulfilled the duties of an apostle, but it is not so well known that ecclesiastical tradition charges Matthias to have afterwards taught the doctrines of the Nicolaitanes,† which Christ (*Rev. ii. 6, 15*) expressly said "*he hated*."

* I find Macknight on Epistles, *Prelim. Essays No. 1*, has expressed a similar opinion on this transaction.

† This tradition is preserved in Eusebius, (*Eccles. Hist. lib. iii. chap. 29,*) who states that Nicholas the deacon, from whom ecclesiastical tradition has ever derived

That the election of Matthias could not have been recognized by Christ, we apprehend may be further insisted upon from *Rev. xxi. 14*, which in describing the city of the celestial Jerusalem, states its foundations bore the names of “the *twelve apostles* of the Lamb,” &c. If Paul was included in this enumeration, then certainly Matthias was not, for then there would have been *thirteen apostles*, and if Matthias was included, then by the same reason Paul was not. I should think the alternative would be sufficient to determine that Matthias was not legally elected an apostle.

It may be thought however that I am presumptuous in thus undertaking to invalidate an act which the Scripture no where censures, for if the election of Matthias had been contrary to the will of Christ, it is assumed we ought to suppose the transaction would not have been passed over in silence. But those who argue in this manner altogether beg the question, they assume that the apostles did constitute a corporate body, of which there is no proof in the Scripture. Therefore I apprehend that the election of Matthias, however presumptuous it may have been, did not interfere with the functions of the other apostles, as being only so many individual agents in carrying out Christ’s intentions. But we may further remark, that when Christ himself selected Paul to the

the heresy of the Nicolaitanes, on being reproached for jealousy respecting his beautiful wife, brought her forth and gave permission to any one to marry her, (rather cohabit with her) justifying his proceeding by the observation “*that every one ought to abuse his own flesh*. And thus those that adopted his heresy, following both this example and expression, literally rush headlong into fornication without shame.” Eusebius makes some attempt to explain the tradition to a different meaning, and then adds that “they indeed say, (*i. e.* it was a report) that *Matthias* thus taught to fight against and abuse the flesh, not to give way to any thing for the sake of pleasure, and to cultivate the spirit by faith and knowledge.”

That discreditable reports prevailed concerning Nicholas the deacon and Matthias the apostle in the first century, is therefore abundantly clear from the preceding statement, but as to the actual truth we are not sufficiently instructed, for the partiality of the earlier christian writers has endeavored as much as possible to suppress the statement. Thus Eusebius himself does not hesitate to tell us, (*Eccles. Hist. tib. viii. chap. 2.*) that in writing his history he had suppressed accounts of those shaken by persecution, or who had suffered shipwreck in salvation, and that he had only brought forward matters profitable to the then generation of christians and their future posterity.

It is a remarkable circumstance that we find this very doctrine implied above, concerning Nicholas and his wife, to have been expressly taught by Mazdak, one of the followers of Zoroaster. (*Dabistan i. 377.*) “It is a great injustice,” said he, “that one man’s wife should be altogether beautiful, whilst another’s is quite the contrary; it therefore becomes imperative on the score of justice and true religion, for a good man to resign his lovely wife for a short time to his neighbor who has one both evil and ugly, and also take to himself for a short time his neighbor’s deformed consort.”

vacant apostleship, the election of Matthias was thereby as directly censured as if the disapprobation had been communicated in so many express words.

The manifest importance of having correct views concerning the commission and functions of the apostles, induces me to accumulate all the evidence I can collect to shew that they were not a corporation in any sense of that term, but that they acted individually without any formality among themselves as to the course they might choose to adopt.

In proof of this, I apprehend nothing can be plainer than what is urged by Paul when speaking of himself as an apostle. He says, (*Gal. i. 11, 12,*) that the gospel or doctrine he preached, he had not received from men but by direct revelation from Jesus Christ: and that when it pleased God to call him to preach the gospel among the heathen, (*Gal. i. 16,*) he held no conference with the other apostles upon the subject, but went into Arabia; and not until three years after did he go up to Jerusalem, where he saw Peter and lodged with him fifteen days, "but of the other apostles I saw none but James," &c. Fourteen years afterwards he again visited Jerusalem, where he conferred *privately* with such of the apostles as "*were of reputation,*" which is a direct proof that he held no conference with them as a corporation. He then goes on to state, in further confirmation of our opinion, that notwithstanding the eminence that any of these apostles may have possessed in the general estimation of the christian brethren, that they "*added nothing to me,*" *i. e.* they did not communicate any knowledge or instruction concerning the principles of Christianity that he did know already. "And when," says he, "James, Peter and John, *who seemed to be pillars,*" (*i. e.* the more influential persons whether among the apostles or the brethren,) "perceived the grace that was given to me," (*i. e.* that he was manifestly under the guidance of God's spirit,) "they gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision," &c. (*i. e.* that they should each continue to act in the same individual capacities as they had already done during the past fourteen years.)

From the various arguments we have now brought forward as bearing on the subject, we apprehend we are fully justified to conclude that Christ called the apostles as mere individuals, and he commissioned them each to act in their individual capacities only. As such, they went forth into the world as it were upon so many different missionary enterprises, wherein each regulated the con-

verts he made by his own views of religious propriety, and not according to any enactments of the apostles as an ecclesiastical corporation, who had established some common organization by which the christian world was to be governed in future.

Having now shown, as we presume, sufficient reasons to justify the conclusion, that neither Christ nor the apostles could have ever contemplated the organization of an ecclesiastical corporation or clergy, let us now examine the foundations upon which such a doctrine has been hitherto advocated in the christian world. The opinions of men on this subject have been derived from inferences made from various texts of the New Testament, which have been wrought into an ecclesiastical system by the following mode of proceeding. The clergy have collected together all those passages in which Christ has spoken concerning the calling and ministry of the apostles, and after having made an application of them to the apostles in the first instance, they have then given these texts a universal and perpetual application to the whole ecclesiastical body, for all future time, by an interpretation of two remarkable passages of Scripture, still further enlarged in their significance by human notions as to the religious expediency of such an institution.

The passages to which I allude are, *first*, *Math. xvi. 18*, “Thou art Peter, and upon this rock *I build my church, and the gates of hades*” (*i. e.* destruction) “*shall not prevail against it.*”

The *second passage* is from *Math. xxviii. 20*, “*Go ye therefore and teach all nations, &c. and lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world.*”

Both of these passages, it is said, imply a perpetuity of the church to the consummation of all things, and consequently in the promise of Christ to be with the apostles in their ministerial labors *to the end of the world*, we are necessarily compelled to conclude that Christ’s words apply to the ecclesiastical body in general; for as the apostles themselves died after the lapse of a few years, so Christ could not have been with them to the end of the world, and therefore his promise must be understood to apply to the continuous existence of an ecclesiastical corporation of ministers of the gospel, until the literal ending of the world shall take place.

Let us now examine these two important passages and see if the above conclusion be legitimately inferred, and first of that text of *Math. xvi. 18*, “*upon this rock I build my church, and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it.*”

In order to give this passage the requisite force for the construction that is put upon it, it is contended by those who advocate the

hypothesis of a divinely constituted body of ecclesiastics, that the word *church* here means the *clergy*, if not absolutely yet essentially so, as those who give form and consistency to the universal church, or congregation of all sincere believers in Jesus Christ.

But of all the unwarrantable assumptions of men as to the meaning of a word, I apprehend the one that asserts that the term church here implies either absolutely or essentially an ecclesiastical corporation seems to be the most unreasonable, for out of one hundred and fifteen instances in which the word *church* is used in the New Testament, there has been hitherto but one text brought forward to sustain such an interpretation, *viz.* *Math.* xviii. 17, “if thy brother offend thee, &c. tell it to the *church*, and if he disregard the *church*, let him then be to thee as a heathen and a publican.”

But can anything be more gratuitous than to infer from this text that *church* here signifies *clergy*. Is it not equally as reasonable to suppose that the reference was to be made to the members of a particular church or congregation for their arbitration, as to assume it was to be done before a divinely constituted clergy. It ought to be first proved that such an ecclesiastical body had an existence before an application of the text can be tolerated, but to not only assume such a meaning without any proof, and then use it as a lever to upturn and confound every other part of Scripture inconsistent with such an interpretation, is one of the most unreasonable perversions ever attempted by any system of will-worship.

The reference made by our Saviour as above, (*Math.* xviii. 17,) is most distinctly intelligible by the practice of the synagogue as we have shewn, Vol. I. 143, 508, in the institution of the *beth-deen*, and to which there can be no reason whatever to doubt that our Saviour distinctly referred, as a matter with which all that heard him were familiar.*

*This question however is fully determined by Paul's reproof of the Corinthians (1 *Cor.* vi. 1—5) concerning their disputes among each other which carried them for settlement before heathen tribunals. Paul, after censuring them for their conduct in that particular, then recommends them to refer such matters to some of their christian brethren for arbitration.

Hence it is utterly incredible that Christ had constituted a body of clergy to exercise any jurisdiction among the members of christian congregations. Otherwise Paul would have directly instructed the Corinthians to appeal to such clergy, even if they themselves had unaccountably disregarded a positive institution of Christ. Such a supposition however is absurd, for the church at Corinth had been originally organized by Paul himself but two years previously, and hence it is incredible that he should have omitted to instruct them upon this important institution, if there had been such, that the clergy by Christ's appointment were to determine the differences arising among professing christians.

If any one will examine so common a book as Cruden's Concordance, he must be fully satisfied that the term *church* in the New Testament, essentially implies the whole body of believers in Jesus Christ throughout the world; secondly that it is used elliptically as signifying those portions of the universal body that resided in any particular kingdom, province, city, or even those who met for religious edification in a single house. In no one instance whatever is it ever used to imply a body of clergy or ministers of the gospel. Disregarding therefore the unwarrantable attempts that have been made to apply the term church as above stated to the clergy, the sense of Christ's words in *Math.* xvi. 18, are distinctly clear that a body of faithful believers in him should always exist in the world, not necessarily that they should constitute any visibly organized society, but that no destructive agency or persecution should so far prevail against the true followers of Jesus Christ so as to exterminate them. He did not promise them immunities from persecution and suffering, but he guaranteed them a perpetuity of existence until the consummation of all things.*

The other passage to which the advocates of a divine corporation of ecclesiastics refer in support of their opinion, is *Math.* xxviii. 18—20, where Christ addressed the apostles in the following words: "All power is given unto me, &c. Go ye therefore and disciple all nations, &c. teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, *and lo I am with you always to the ending of the world.*"

As I have already stated in the preceding page the argument the clergy have deduced from these words, it is unnecessary to again repeat it. Its whole force in their application of the text lies in the meaning that is given to the words, "*unto the end of the world.*"

If the direct meaning of the Greek words translated "*end of the world*" had been properly estimated in former times, there could not have been that false construction put upon them that is seemingly justified from our translation of the New Testament. Our Saviour's words correctly rendered are not to the end of the *world*, (*κοσμού*;)† but to the end of the *AGE*, (*αιώνος*.)

*That the disciples of Christ could exist without any formal constitution or visible organization, is no more anomalous, than that his kingdom, which by-the-by is the same thing, should exist in the world without external "observation." See *Luke* xvii. 20, 21. The same condition of things is also implied in *1 Kings* xix. 18, where when the prophet Elijah stated that he knew of none that served God rightly, Jehovah told him he had still seven thousand men in Israel who had not departed from the true faith.

† *Kosmos*, *the world*, occurs one hundred and eighty times in the New Testament. It properly means the material world, though it is used in many places

To understand the precise import of this term *age*, we must remark what is well known to all persons conversant with rabbinical literature, that the Jews divided the history of mankind into *three ages*, the first of which was the *age before the law*, or the Patriarchal age. The second was the *age under the law*, or Jewish Dispensation; and the third was the *age under the Messiah*. This distinction of ages, as compared with each other, gave rise among the Jews to many peculiar modes of expression concerning these respective times; for instance, when speaking of the existing or Jewish age, they spoke of it as the "*present age*," or the "*present life*," as contradistinguished from the age of the Messiah which was termed the "*future age*," sometimes the "*better age*," "*latter age*," "*latter days*," the "*future life*," &c. which phrases I believe may be all recognized in the Scripture writings.

When Christ therefore told the apostles he would be with them to the *end of the age*, we contend he simply signified he would be with them and his disciples in a miraculously helping manner until the *end of the then existing or Jewish age*, which terminated with the destruction of Jerusalem, and dispersion of the Jewish people, about forty years after Christ's exaltation to heaven. There is no promise whatever made by Christ that implies any continuance of special assistance or presence among his followers beyond the termination of the *Jewish age*; and therefore the promise made to the apostles was only personal to them, and does not belong to those who might come after them in time as ministers of the Christian Dispensation.

The advocates for a church corporation of ecclesiastics however contend, that the end of the age of which Christ spoke is the same as saying the end of the world, for that the christian age, or age under the Messiah had already commenced, for according to *Math. xxviii. 18*, Christ himself said "*all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth*," and consequently, that the *age under the Messiah* had now commenced, and therefore the end of it must necessarily be synchronous with the absolute ending of the material world.

This inference, however plausible it may seem, is nevertheless altogether incorrect, for our Saviour himself has given us *data* by which we can clearly shew the *end of the Jewish age* was when the destruction of the temple and dispersion of the Jews took place.

elliptically, as signifying the kingdoms of *this world*, i. e. people or men living in *the world*. It is distinctly used to signify the *material world* in thirty-nine places of the New Testament.

Our Saviour having foretold the great calamities that should fall upon the men of that generation, (*Math.* xxiii. 34—36,) in the first two verses of the ensuing chapter, predicted the utter destruction of the temple. In the third verse his disciples enquired, “When shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of *the end of the age*,” (*αιώνος*) not *world*, as it is in our translation. In answer to these questions he gives them many cautions lest they should be too precipitate in making a conclusion on this subject. He foretells them that many false Messiahs should arise who should seduce many persons. He further says ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars, but be ye not troubled for all these things must come to pass *but the end is not yet*: *i. e.* the end of the Jewish age has not yet come. “But when this gospel of the kingdom (of heaven) shall be preached in all the world,” (*ολη τη οικουμένη, the inhabited earth*, by which the Roman Empire is essentially understood) “for a witness unto all nations, *then shall the end come*,” (*i. e.* of the Jewish age.) He next gives them a sign by which they should escape the prophesied destruction. “When therefore ye shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet stand in the holy place, whoso readeth let him understand.” Understand what? Why, of course, that *the end of the Jewish age* was near at hand. “Then,” says he, “let them that be in Judea flee into the mountains,” &c. Luke xxi. 20, is still more distinct; “When ye shall see *Jerusalem encompassed by armies*, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh,” which prophecy, as is well known, was the salvation of the christian Jews.

It is therefore manifest from the above passages that the *end of the Jewish age* did not take place until the destruction of Jerusalem, and consequently Christ’s promise to be with the apostles *until the end of the age*, can only be understood as applicable to the *end of the Jewish age*, for the *age of the Messiah* had not commenced when he made the promise, nor did it commence until about forty years afterwards.*

In view of the question asked above (*Math.* xxiv. 3) respecting the time of Christ’s coming, and end of the (Jewish) age, we refer also to his observations, *Math.* x. 23; xvi. 28, as evidently implying

* Commentators have been greatly perplexed how to settle the connection of the 29th—31st verses of this xxiv. chap. of *Math.* with the preceding verses. The ancient opinion that the day of Judgment would immediately follow the destruction of Jerusalem is necessarily incorrect. Yet I apprehend the literal day of Judgment is implied in the 30 and 31st verses. But the 29th verse relates to a different subject altogether, and is simply a prediction in metaphoric terms, of the commencement of the corruption of Christianity. I would paraphrase the verse

that his technical coming would take place at a time measurably remote, yet not exceeding the limits of a natural life. Such an interpretation accords well with the destruction of Jerusalem, but would be inconsistent with the assumption that the *age of the Messiah* or technical beginning of his kingdom commenced with his resurrection, or with his exaltation to heaven, for as these circumstances occurred only a year or two after he made the observation, he would hardly have used the vague terms "there be *some* standing here," which seemingly imply that but a few of those who heard him make the remark would live to see it.

I may also add, in further confirmation of this view, that Paul after mentioning certain things that had occurred in Jewish history of former times, (1 Cor. x. 11,) says, "these things are written for our admonition upon whom the end of the ages (*αιώνας*) are come." Paul therefore still considered the Jewish age as not yet ended. I presume he uses the word *ages* in the plural as implying both the Patriarchal and the Jewish ages together, as preceding the *age of the Messiah* that now was at hand and which might soon be expected to commence.

A further proof that Christ's promise to be with the apostles to the end of the age, can only be considered as being personal to them in its application, may, I apprehend, be distinctly inferred from *Mark* xvi. 15, &c. Christ is there stated to have directed the apostles in the following words, "Go ye into all the world (*κοσμον*) and preach the gospel to every creature," (i. e. to all mankind,) "And these signs shall follow *them* that believe. In my name *they* shall cast out devils, *they* shall speak with new tongues, *they* shall take up serpents, and if *they* drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt *them*; *they* shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover." *Mark* then adds, that they (the apostles) "went forth and preached every where, the Lord working with them and confirming the word with signs following," i. e. with the exhibition of the miraculous confirmation as stated above.

This remarkable passage renders the commission given by Christ to his apostles perfectly intelligible as to its extent in point of time, for the reader will observe that these miraculous powers are not

thus, "Immediately, *i. e.* very soon after this prophecied destruction of Jerusalem, the truths of Christianity shall begin to be corrupted by those who have influence among believers in Christ, which shall ultimately terminate in an utter departure from the truth." It would seem such a state of things would essentially continue until the day of Judgment, however remote, but at which time, according to 30th verse, "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man," &c. "who would then gather his elect," &c.

mentioned as having been conferred on the apostles, but that *those who should believe in Jesus Christ from the preaching of the apostles*, would shew forth all the wonderful works we have just enumerated. The miraculous abilities of *the converts*, would be evidence that Christ was assisting the apostles in proclaiming the gospel.

Now if these miraculous signs accompanied the preaching of the apostles during their natural lives, or to about forty years after the ascension when Titus destroyed Jerusalem, we see distinctly the fulfilment of Christ's promise that he would be with the apostles (personally) until the end of the (Jewish) age. But if the commission to the apostles implied Christ's promise to continue with the ecclesiastical corporation who should succeed them in time, even until the ending of the world as literally understood, then we ought to find *at this very day*, as well as in every age since that commission was given, that when men become converts to Christianity that *then*, the above miraculous exhibitions have followed, and that *the converts* have power to *cast out devils, speak with new tongues, take up serpents, and recover the sick by the imposition of their hands.*

But no converts to Christianity accomplish such miracles now, neither is there any satisfactory evidence to establish the fact that such things have taken place since the days of the apostles, and every consideration from Scripture or elsewhere justifies us in believing, that though certain individuals upon whom the apostles laid their hands, were enabled to exhibit miraculous powers, yet there is not the smallest reason to believe that such persons had the ability to communicate similar powers. I apprehend a proof of this may be inferred from the relation made concerning Simon Magus in *Acts viii. &c.* which states that Philip having gone down to Samaria performed so many miracles there that Simon professed his belief in the doctrines taught by Philip, and was baptized into a profession of the Christian faith; and "he continued with Philip and wondered beholding the miracles and signs which were done," (*i. e.* by Philip.) It is evident that none of those converted to Christ through Philip's preaching had acquired those supernatural influences that would enable them to perform similar miracles. But all these signs followed when Peter and John (apostles) laid their hands on them, and Simon Magus seeing this offered Peter money that he might be able to exercise the same power.

This relation seems to shew distinctly that the promise of Christ to be with the apostles to the end of the age, was in enabling *them* to afford mankind miraculous evidence of their divine commission;

and further that it was *personal, exclusively confined to them*, and was not transmissible. This fact is most undoubtedly inferrible from the history of Philip as above stated, for though in virtue of an imposition of hands by the apostles he could perform miraculous acts, yet he could not communicate a like ability to other persons.

The early termination of miraculous powers among the primitive christians is universally admitted by all reasonable Protestants, though some have contended for a longer continuance of them than others. For my part I know of no sufficiently authenticated miracle after the first century of our era, and I apprehend the reason is sufficiently evident. Christ only promised his miraculous presence or assistance to the apostles personally in preaching the gospel until the end of the Jewish age, and no longer. When the apostles died, as there were none to communicate miraculous powers, miracles therefore necessarily ceased with the death of those upon whom the apostles had laid their hands.*

The reader however need not be perplexed by attempts that have been made to shew that miraculous powers continued in the christian world to a later period than the one to which I have assigned their termination. My argument is based on the fact that they do not exist *at the present day*, for if Christ promised to be with the clergy as an ecclesiastical corporation to the literal ending of the world, then I insist upon it that according to *Mark* xvi. 15 to 18, miraculous powers should still characterize those *who believe, and are baptized unto Christ*; for the relation made by Mark is as essential a part of the apostolic commission as the statement of any other evangelist.

The utter inability therefore of converts to Christianity to exhibit miraculous powers at the present day, is a sensible test of the nullity of those spiritual powers claimed by the clergy as derived from Christ's commission to the apostles, and he must be very willing indeed to be deluded into the doctrine of spiritual powers having been conferred on modern ecclesiastics, where the foundation for such belief is laid, not on the whole communication made by Christ to the apostles, but by having detached from it the proofs that

* Such is the decided opinion of Archbishop Whateley, (*Essays 2d Series*, 326, 327.) Hinds, (*Hist. Rise Christ.* i. 228, 229.) Dr. Arnold, (*Life and Corresp.* 269, 270.) Locke, (*3d Let. for Tol. chap. 10.*) Bishop Kaye, (*Eccles. Hist. from Tertul.* 92, 93.) The most satisfactory view however is given by Middleton: "Free Inquiry into Miraculous Powers," &c. As the proper exposition of this subject requires more space than a marginal note, I refer the reader to our Appendix, Art. No. 9.

Christ had attached to their commission, as evidences to mankind that he had sent them.

The next step in our investigation concerning the value of those arguments by which theologians maintain the constitution of a church as being divinely instituted by Christ or the apostles,* brings us into that perplexed controversy that exists in the christian world at the present time concerning the character and functions of those persons who as bishops, presbyters, and deacons, are supposed to hold a position originally assigned them either by Christ or the apostles.

The Catholic Church maintains that the apostles as a divine corporation, with St. Peter at their head as the vicar of Jesus Christ, organized the Christian Church and ordained ministers to the discharge of various functions essential to the edification of the members, as well as communicating divine grace to them through the administration of sacraments.

The Catholic Church in her constitution recognizes but two orders in the ministry,† *viz.* priests and deacons; though they divide them

* I take no notice of the controversy between Catholics and Protestants as to the import of our Saviour's words to Peter, (*Math.* xvi. 18, 19,) "Thou art a rock," &c. for it is of no importance to us what was the true meaning of those words, unless it can be shewn that their sense was to be extended to those who should succeed Peter.

The same remark applies to *John* xx. 21, 22. As my Father has sent me even so I send you. What right has any one to infer from these words that a commission was thus given the apostles to send others in like manner?

Neither have I noticed our Saviour's encouraging speech to the apostles (*Math.* xviii. 20) where he says, "where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them." On these words there are two opposite misconstructions, for while the clergy have arrogated them to themselves, the laity have as absurdly applied them under sectarian restrictions to any meeting of *christian laymen*. Any unprejudiced mind will perceive at once from the eighteenth and nineteenth verses preceding, that Christ's promise on the subject was exclusively made to the apostles, as those who had authority from him to bind and loose.

† Most Protestants at the present day, particularly those of English descent, may be surprised at the above statement, for the influence of the Church of England has been such as to prejudice the minds of most persons with the belief that the Church of Rome recognizes bishops to be a *third order of the ministry*. But at the council of Trent where certain bishops made the utmost exertion to be recognized as an order by divine right, (*jure divino*.) they were defeated in the debates previous to the twenty-third session, by a vote of 127 to 54, and the doctrine stands as I have stated it in the text. Bingham and other advocates of English episcopacy have attributed the defeat of the bishops at Trent to the intrigues of the Pope, which may be true enough, but then it was *intrigue* against *intrigue*, or as Father Paul in his History of the Council has observed, "neither party could speak on the subject but that their dissimulation was perceived." The doctrine however of the bishops that they were so *jure divino* had never been recognized in the Catholic Church, as is evident from the very discussion that took place at the Council of

into various *degrees*. Thus by the Council of Trent it was decreed there are seven orders, porter, reader, exorcist, acolyte, sub-deacon, deacon, and priest. Of these some are called *holy orders*, some *minor orders*. The holy orders, are the sub-deaconship, deaconship, and priesthood. The minor orders are porter, reader, exorcist, and acolyte.

Of the *holy orders* the priesthood is further subdivided as follows: "the order of priesthood though essentially one, has different degrees of dignity and power. The first is confined to those who are simply called priests," (i. e. presbyters.) "The second is that of bishops, the third archbishops, the fourth patriarchs, and lastly superior to all these is the sovereign pontiff or pope."—See *Catechism Council of Trent: Sacrament of Orders*.

The Church of England differs from the Catholic Church in respect to her ecclesiastical organization in two important particulars. *First*, in denying the supremacy of the pope as the successor of St. Peter and vicar of Christ, and *secondly*, in maintaining that bishops are a *third order* in the church, expressly constituted by the apostles, and as such, having divine powers to ordain presbyters and deacons. None therefore who have not been episcopally ordained, according to them, have any right to administer sacraments, ordain other ministers, or preach to the laity. Under this theory Catholic priests if they become Protestants are admitted by the Church of England to perform ecclesiastical functions without further ordination, which concession is not extended to Protestant ministers of any denomination who may join the ministry of the Church of England.

The great body of Protestants differ from the Church of England in denying that bishops are a different order from presbyters. It is maintained by them that the term *bishop* is a mere synonymous

Trent. If the bishops had been considered a *third order of the ministry* previously, there could have been no dispute on a matter of fact at that time.

I have had no opportunity, even if it had been worth the trouble, to examine the mass of the canons on the subject, yet in Hart's *Ecclesiastical Records*, p. 87, I found the view of the Council of Trent fully sustained in the canons of Ælfric, of the English Church, enacted A. D. 970, which says, "there is not much difference between a bishop and a presbyter, except that the bishop is appointed to ordain priests and confirm children, which would have been committed to too many if every presbyter might do this. *Both have one and the same order*, although the *Episcopal degree* is more honorable."

In Bergier's *Dictionnaire Théologique*, art. *Eveque*, the reader will find that the question whether the *Episcopate* was an *order* or only a *degree*, had been anciently discussed among the schoolmen, and was generally determined to be the last.

with presbyter or elder, as is evident from the New Testament which every where uses them as such.

Such Protestants however still regard the apostles to have been an ecclesiastical corporation in which all were equal in authority, and hence they deny any supremacy to Peter or to his pretended successor the bishop of Rome. They further assert there were no persons appointed to succeed the apostles, but that they ordained presbyters or bishops, the terms being synonymous, to the discharge of the ministerial functions with exclusive powers to ordain other presbyters and deacons, and that without such ordination no one can lawfully undertake to administer sacraments, or preach to the people.

Whatever, therefore may be the different views held by the various Christian seets concerning the actual constitution of the church, they all agree essentially in the fact, that the apostles were an ecclesiastical corporation invested with authority by Christ, and that as such they conveyed ecclesiastical authority to those persons who as clergy or ministers of the gospel have succeeded them in all times to the present.

That this theory is radically erroneous, we trust has been sufficiently proved in our preceding pages, where we have shewn that the apostles were not a corporation in any sense of the term, and consequently they could not have conferred corporate powers upon other persons since they possessed none themselves.

It is an error, attended with no small amount of mischievous consequences, that prevails with most persons in supposing the words bishop, presbyter, and deacon, were terms that originated with Christ or the apostles, as designating different orders of ministers. This is a gross mistake, for all these terms had been in use among the Jews for centuries before the advent of Jesus Christ. And since neither Christ nor the apostles have given these words any new meaning by an express definition, we can only regard them in the general sense attached to them by the Jews at the times in which the New Testament was written. We have already shewn, Vol. I. 136, 141, 508, that the terms elder and presbyter simply imply persons having rule, supervision or authority whether in a political or ecclesiastical sense, and that as such, they subserved among the Jews the various purposes that are implied among us by the words directors, leaders, superintendents, rulers, governors, and nothing more.

That persons designated as bishops or presbyters and deacons, have existed in christian congregations from the times of the apos-

ties is indisputable. But the important question is, did they hold that position in virtue of a divine commission, or merely from convenience or expediency, as matters of order essential to the meetings of a society who assembled together more or less frequently for social purposes.

Wherever assemblies of men take place, there must be some persons among them to act as presidents, managers, leaders, &c. whilst others discharge inferior functions, such as secretaries, assistants, door keepers, &c. The necessity of having persons to act in similar capacities is as evident in a religious assembly as in any other social meeting, and therefore such persons, call them by whatever names we may, have always existed in christian communities or congregations. The matter in dispute is, whether such official persons had a divine commission as an ecclesiastical corporation, whereby they were expressly authorized to do certain acts, which are as expressly forbidden to be done by believers at large. We contest the fact that the ministers of the gospel have a divine commission, or any exclusive authority to administer sacraments, ordain other ecclesiastics, or to expound Scripture as a body of men consecrated by Christ to such functions.

The shortest as well as the most effectual plan that I can adopt, whether in controverting the above hypothesis or in sustaining my own views, will be to make an issue between the two opinions, and then to examine every passage in the Acts or the Epistles, that mention the ministers of the gospel either directly or incidently. By taking up the consideration of these particulars in due chronological order, we shall not only have a full view of every text that bears directly upon the subject, but we shall also be able to estimate the peculiar condition of things involved in the omission to state such particulars on certain occasions, which it will be presently shown are fully as important in enabling us to correctly appreciate this subject, as it is to quote those passages of Scripture that directly bear upon it. It is in great measure because this rational mode of investigation has been overlooked, that there is so much controversy among christians on the subject.

But before we proceed to such an examination there are some historieal expositions to be made, that must be well understood before we can make any application of Scripture texts as bearing on the subject of church organization.

Most persons inconsiderately regard the primitive christians in the light of a mere worshipping assembly, like those religious associations of our own day who under various denominations meet

together on Sunday, and after the services of the day, separate to meet no more until the next Sunday. In the interval, being essentially occupied with their temporal employments, they think little if any thing concerning church matters.

But the condition of the primitive christians was entirely different, they were not united on the principle of being a worshipping assembly, but on the christian scheme of being an association of brothers and sisters who through the principle of their common faith were expressly commanded by Christ to love one another, and to do every thing in their power that would indicate that love by promoting every interest of the brotherhood whether temporal or spiritual. Hence their public worship was not the object of christian association, but was merely contingent and accessory to it.

The primitive christians, therefore, as being a society of brothers and sisters, had a variety of duties to perform towards each other. They were bound to provide for their sick and necessitous members, and to visit and console them in any affliction, trouble, temptation, persecution, &c. They were equally concerned in the religious instruction of their brethren on all subjects pertaining to the common faith, and to remonstrate with those who might shew a disposition to fall back again to the world. In short, as being brethren, the primitive christians considered themselves under all those obligations that belong to an actual family of brothers and sisters who really love one another.

But besides the duties they were to perform to their christian brethren, they were bound to exercise a philanthropic conduct towards Jews and Heathens, and to extend Christ's kingdom by an active exertion to induce such persons to unite themselves with his professed followers.

The consequence of this social constitution was, that the action of the primitive christians, as comprehending various objects and purposes, required various persons to take charge of, or to take the lead in their severall agencies according to their personal abilities or inclinations.

Hence we shall find, on investigating the plan of operations pursued by the primitive christians, that in the subdivision of their christian duties, while some persons were more especially engaged in expounding the principles and doctrines of Christianity, or in exhorting the brethren to a strict compliance with all the duties that pertained to them as followers of Jesus Christ, others were engaged in the more practical performance of those duties to which they were competent, or at least which were either directly or indi-

rectly brought within the sphere of their individual action. It would be useless to attempt any specification on the subject, for as christians were a society of brothers and sisters their responsibilities were universal in those particulars. Not only were the brothers engaged in the work, but the sisters also had their peculiar duties to perform. These last, as we shall shew in the progress of our work, constituted an essential part of the economy of the church organization, and especially so in the eastern portion of the Roman Empire where custom forbade men to visit females. Hence to a considerable extent females were required in the primitive church to exercise a ministry towards their own sex, in the fact that there was no other method by which they could be instructed or confirmed in the truths of Christianity, or be sustained in their faith under any circumstances of temptation, peril, or affliction.

But whatever were the duties pertaining to the christian profession, we have no relation made in the New Testament of any scheme or plan of operation having been laid down by the apostles which they were to follow. The broad principle of brotherly love having been made the foundation of their social union, the details were left to themselves, it being supposed they could not err on the principle of brotherly love towards each other, which had been so largely enforced upon them both by Christ and his several apostles.

In the settlement of the controversy that exists in our day concerning the true organization of the primitive church, it is of the utmost importance that the reader should distinctly appreciate this actual condition of christian society at its first establishment, as we have stated it above; for upon such a condition of things their whole action was based, and it is only by reference to it that we can rightly estimate what was done by them. This subject is still more important on the present occasion, because I contest the ordinary opinion that Christ constituted any ministry or clergy as a divinely appointed body.

In order therefore to make a full issue between the prevailing opinion on that subject and the one that I advocate, I shall now proceed to state the principle upon which I consider the congregations of christians were organized in the days of the apostles, as far as we can discern the subject from the several books of the New Testament.

The result of my investigation is as follows: *First*, when any number of christian believers were sufficiently numerous in any locality to form a society or congregation, their theory of organization was either substantially like that of an ordinary prayer meet-

ing, such as is held by devout laymen among us at the present day; or *secondly*, when a body of converts to Christianity had been made by the preaching of an apostle, it would seem that he ordinarily at least, selected certain persons to watch over them and to instruct them, essentially in a manner analogous to what is done by the *class leaders* in the society of Methodists. In an ensuing age, after the decease of the apostles, the members of these several associations or congregations, however originally formed, henceforth selected their leaders by some formal expression of their own approbation.

But that there may be no misapprehension as to the application of my arguments hereafter, I must first state what is to be understood by a prayer, or a class meeting, as illustrating the views advanced above concerning the organization of the primitive church.

The prayer meeting that I recognize as an illustration, is the one where devout laymen, without any clergyman, meet together for purposes of mutual religious edification. They have no formal constitution nor by-laws, yet it will be found after the lapse of a few weeks that the association has acquired a consistency of form, and that certain individuals among them have become prominent in the association as those who commonly make the public prayer, read the Scripture, or exhort and instruct the members; as well as make any address to the association on any extrinsic subject interesting to them. These persons thus become leaders or officers in the society only through the tacit approbation of the other members, and not by any formal election. Their number is necessarily indefinite from the theory of their union, that pre-supposes that whenever any member is able to say any thing to the edification of his associates, he either will do so from the instigation of his own feelings, or else will be invited to do so by those who are aware of his ability. A society thus organized may continue to exist in a similar manner for centuries, as individuals will be found continually coming forward among the new members, to supply vacancies occurring among the leaders whether from death or from any other causes.

If contributions in money are required from the members for the common expenses, such as rent for the room in which they meet, fire-wood, lamps, &c. the necessity is announced by one of the leaders, and a collection made which is disbursed and accounted for by a statement made to the meeting, and so in like manner with any other matter that the association may please to approve of, whether of a religious or mere benevolent character. The reader can thus fully comprehend by this familiar illustration, that every

particular involved in the well being of such an association can be quietly disposed of among themselves without election of officers with defined powers, and without any formal constitution or laws. And such, I apprehend, was the original form of christian societies among the Jewish converts, who being familiar with synagogue institutions met together as we have suggested above on the principle of a mere prayer meeting. The leaders in such assemblies, the primitive christians designated according to their own idiom as being *zokonem*, elders, which meant nothing more than is signified by our terms, directors, or superintendents. Those employed in more subordinate capacities they termed *deacons*, *i. e.* servants assistants, &c.

If an individual was sufficiently wealthy and willing to provide a room, fuel, lights, &c. in his own house for the accommodation of his christian brethren, they met there in the same manner as stated above, and this I presume explains the words occasionally used in the Epistles, such as *Coloss.* iv. 15, "salute Nymphas and the church (congregation) that is in his house."

The class meeting, which I have mentioned above as furnishing us with another illustration of the mode in which other congregations of the primitive church was organized, was an institution of the celebrated Mr. Wesley, the founder of Methodism, a man of apostolic spirit and temper. He had travelled over England and Ireland, preaching the gospel and converting thousands of persons to a religious life. In the first instance he was perplexed how to preserve this religious feeling among his converts, who then had no external bond of union. But a suggestion having been made at Bristol to pay a debt upon the house in which he preached, by the contribution from each member of the society of a penny a week; in order to ensure the regular collection of this small sum, the contributors were divided into classes of twelve each, and the individual who collected the pennies was termed their leader, &c.

The acute mind of Mr. Wesley soon perceived that in this simple arrangement he would have the means for exerting that moral influence over his converts that he had so much desired previously, he therefore divided all his followers into small classes, and appointed such leaders over them who were competent, in his judgment, to watch over their moral and religious conduct, who could pray with them and exhort, instruct, or reprove them as might be necessary. This institution was made permanent in the Methodist church under the following simple form: On some particular day of the week, most convenient to themselves, a class

meeting is held, at which every member is expected to appear. The meeting is opened by the leader with a prayer, and is followed by an exhortation from him. The leader then enquires of each individual as to his spiritual state and encourages, exhorts, or cautions them according to circumstances. Psalms or hymns are then sung, a collection for the expenses of the church is taken up, and the meeting closes with a prayer either from the leader, or any other person of the meeting he may request to act in that capacity.

It is to the class meeting in its peculiar feature as being under the direction of a leader, *who is a simple layman* not selected by themselves, that I find an analogy to the organization established by the apostles among their disciples in certain instances, and which was more especially the case with those converted from the Gentiles. In other words, the apostles in these instances, designated the leaders or superintendents, which ordinarily with the Jewish disciples arose from the tacit approbation of the members of the societies among themselves.

The various churches of the primitive christians were thus organized, whether according to the principle of the prayer or class meeting; and their respective leaders or elders from their mere position exercised all those functions which are now restricted to the clergy, such as exhorting, preaching, praying, administering baptism, or in commemorating the Lord's supper. They had no exclusive authority to perform such functions, but just as it is in a prayer meeting, where though any one of the association has a right either to exhort or pray in public, yet the majority never claim to exercise that right, but leave it to those who more commonly act in those capacities.

At the same time that the *zokonem*, elders, or presbyters, thus performed those services which are now especially arrogated by the clergy to themselves, the more humble services necessary in the association were performed by those who, in the Greek language, were termed *deacons*, *i. e.* ministers or servants. The function of deacon in the first instance, under the influence of oriental customs, required two classes of persons, *viz. males* for services among men, *females* for those among the women. These whether as deacons or deaconesses, were to visit, comfort, instruct, or relieve the wants or afflictions of the several members whether as males or females, under the proprieties of eastern usages.—See our prefatory remarks at page 181, &c. on the general subject.

That such simple forms of organization as the prayer or class meetings were amply sufficient for christian edification or instruc-

tion, may be distinctly inferred from the fact that the religious system promulgated in the New Testament requires no theological or speculative teaching. There are no esoteric doctrines to be communicated to the people, and the simple requirements of the gospel as being perfectly intelligible to the plainest capacities, are there merely announced to mankind for moral or religious observance. It is our duty to carry them out into practice, and it is not our duty to speculate upon them as theological subtleties.

I further remark, from what was urged at pages 119, 160, there is no authority whatever from the New Testament to regard the sacraments as means of grace, or that there is any direction given that requires them to be dispensed by a consecrated body of men. The pious leaders of a prayer or class meeting are fully as holy in their lives and as competent therefore to their administration as any body of the clergy let their denomination be what it may.

And finally I apprehend, as was the case among the Jews, Vol. I. 204, &c. so during the continuance of the Christian Dispensation, its divine founder expressly anticipated as a part of the system, that pious individuals, like the uninspired prophets of Old Testament times, would be always found among his followers, who by their various intellectual or spiritual gifts would be abundantly qualified to oppose error, maintain truth, and extend the light of the gospel throughout the world, under the sense of their personal responsibilities in such particulars.

They were to teach, not with authority, but on the principle recognized in the Lancasterian schools; what one boy has learned he can teach another boy who is more ignorant.

Having stated my own views concerning the original constitution of christian churches, I shall now make an issue on the subject with those who contend, that Christ or the apostles constituted a body of ecclesiastics as a divine corporation, in virtue of which they possess an exclusive commission to declare what are the true doctrines of Christianity, to administer sacraments as sanctifying ordinances, and of ordaining other persons to the exercise of the clerical function, so that any one who is not thus lawfully ordained, violates the institutions of Christ by undertaking to perform any of the acts above specified.

The manner in which I think this issue can be best tried, is to *first* examine in chronological order the historical statements of the Acts of the apostles, wherever the subject of the ministry may be either mentioned or alluded to. *Secondly*, to examine the Epistles of the several apostles, in the order in which they are commonly

supposed to have been written, as bearing on the particulars above mentioned. The evidence being thus brought fairly before the reader he can draw his own conclusions, and as the best exposition of the advantages of such a mode of proceeding will be seen in the execution of it, I shall commence the investigation without further observation.

A few days after the unauthorized election of Matthias as an apostle, of which I have already spoken, the Jewish feast of Pentecost took place, when the manifestation of the Holy Spirit as had been promised by Christ, rested not upon the apostles exclusively but, as we have inferred at page 31, upon the whole one hundred and twenty disciples of our Saviour. But, be this as it may, the apostles immediately commenced to preach that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah or Christ, and their preaching was accompanied with such evidences of its truth, and of the divine approbation, that in a few days at least five thousand persons became converts to their doctrine, who made a common stock of their wealth and lived together on the contribution. But though they thus associated themselves together, they did not adopt any new form of religious worship, for it is stated (*Acts* ii. 46) "they continued daily with one accord in the temple," which necessarily implies the observance of the Mosaic institutions, and that they did not establish any peculiar form of religious services for themselves as a society of christians.

The phrase (*Acts* ii. 46) of "breaking bread from house to house," has been commonly supposed to imply the celebration of the Lord's supper, but this construction seems to me to be fanciful, the more legitimate sense appears to be that they eat their meals at the various houses into which the new sect were distributed, for there must have been a considerable number of houses thus designated where five thousand persons lived on a common stock.

But though they did not abandon the observance of the institutions of Moses, yet certainly some regulations concerning their peculiar religious profession and management of their secular concerns must have been adopted among them. The very distribution of the common funds, out of which they lived, necessarily implies this, as well as that important necessity which required them to meet together to be confirmed or instructed in the principles of the new faith they professed in Jesus of Nazareth as being the Messiah. These considerations I presume induced them to assemble themselves together on the first day of the week, which probably soon became designated as the Lord's day, though that term does

not occur in the New Testament but once, and that in the book of Revelations (*chap. i. 10*) which was written about sixty-five years after our Saviour's crucifixion.

But though the necessity for some form of government at this time undoubtedly implies the fact that it did exist, yet nevertheless we have not the smallest information on the subject. We can only conjecture that certain regulations were recognized among them that were sufficient to the general purposes of convenience and edification. We have no reason however to believe that any definite form or peculiar system was established among them upon apostolic authority, for we find two years after the ascension of Christ, (*Acts vi. 1, &c.*) that in consequence of a complaint made by the Greek Jews against the Hebrew Jews, seven Greek Jews were elected to see that "their widows" should not be neglected in the distribution of the common fund. This fact shews the apostles did not consider themselves to have a divine right to legislate for the community, otherwise they would have remedied the complaint by their own authority, instead of appealing to the people as to the unreasonableness of expecting them as apostles to attend to matters which would interfere in their function of "preaching the word of God." It is impossible therefore to suppose that any prescribed form of church organization could have been promulgated at this time, for if so, the disciples could not have expected from the apostles, the most exalted persons in the congregation, the performance of services which could be rendered equally well by any merely upright men among their members.

Though the New Testament does not designate the seven persons chosen on this occasion by any particular appellation, it has been the practice of christians to call them *deacons*, which if understood in the primitive sense of the term as mere *attendants, servants, &c.* is perfectly correct.* The function however of these seven

* The term *deacon*, as comprehending the persons, the office, and the verb from whence they are derived, is used ninety-eight times in the New Testament. In every instance they signify either servant, the office of a servant, or the verb to serve, unless it can be proved there is a different meaning implied when the deacons of the church are named. A few instances will be sufficient to shew the use of the Greek word *deacon* as rendered in our English translation.

His mother said unto the *servants*, which drew the water, &c.—*John ii. 5, 9.*

Who ever will be great among you let him be your *servant*.—*Math. xx. 26.*

If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last and *servant*, &c.—*Mark ix. 35.*

If any man *serve me*, (*diaconé*) let him follow me, and where I am there shall also my *servant* be.—*John xii. 26.*

Jesus Christ was a *minister* of the circumcision.—*Rom. xv. 8.*

persons was local and peculiar, and did not exist in any other community but where men lived on a common fund, which we have no reason to think prevailed elsewhere in the christian world than at Jerusalem.* The deacons mentioned in the epistles to Timothy and Titus were a class of church officers who were to be found in every christian congregation, and whom we suppose exercised functions that comprehended the duties both of the *Chazans* and *Parnasin* of the Jewish synagogue. See Vol. I. 509, &c.

The christian church, some two or three centuries after this time, appear to have generally fallen into the erroneous notion, that the office of deacon arose from the appointment of these seven persons by the apostles, and to this day the sixth chapter of Acts is read when those persons now called deacons are instituted in their office. The ignorance of the primitive christians, after the first century, of synagogue institutions perhaps was the cause of this oversight. I have met with but one instance where church authority has been expressly opposed to the ordinary belief, *viz.* the Synod of Trullo at Constantinople, who, A. D. 692, decreed that the seven persons appointed by the apostles were not of the same order as the deacons of the church.

In consequence of my very imperfect knowledge of the Greek language, I took it for granted that our English translation correctly stated the fact that the seven deacons, as they are called, had been ordained by an imposition of the hands of the apostles. As such a practice was conformable to what was done in the Jewish synagogues on certain occasions, I had no suspicion that the interpretation of the text as ordinarily understood was incorrect, until apprised of the fact by a Catholic friend, whose critical knowledge of the Greek language as respects the classical writings, is surpassed by few if any persons in the United States. He informed me that the grammatical construction of the passage undeniably was, that the GREEK JEWS, and not the apostles, *laid their hands on the so-called deacons*, and that it was impossible to give the passage any other construction without violating all correct principles

Who then is Paul and who Apollos but *ministers* by whom ye believed.—1 Cor. iii. 5.

Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light, wherefore it is no great thing if his *servants* be transformed as the *servants* of righteousness.—2 Cor. xi. 15.

*In the appointment of the seven persons mentioned in *Acts* vi. our translation has “*for this business*,” as if an office, whereas the word is *χρεία*, which properly signifies *need, emergency, exigency, &c.* This word occurs above forty times in the New Testament, and in every other instance but this is uniformly rendered *need* or *necessity*.

of grammar. The Greek words are as follow, *οὐς εστησαν ενώπιον τῶν ἀποστολῶν καὶ προσευξαμένοι επεθηκαν αὐτοῖς τας χειρας.* The true sense of which is “these” (*i. e.* the seven persons) “they,” (the Greek Jews) “placed before the apostles, and having prayed, *they*” (the Greek Jews) “*laid their hands upon them.*”

That this is the correct meaning of the original no one can doubt who is instructed in the Greek language, for it is impossible for any one to shew any Greek authorities for making *Αποστολῶν* (the apostles) which is in the genitive plural, to be the nominative to the verb *επεθηκαν*, *they laid their hands on*, &c.

The impossibility of referring this imposition of hands to the apostles by any construction of the Greek original, was clearly discerned by the writer of Beza's manuscript at Cambridge, who has inserted instead of *καὶ and*, the word *οἵτινες who*, by which the imposition of hands *on the part of the apostles* is very clearly expressed. Griesbach however gives no other manuscript as containing this reading.

The force of our argument is also indirectly acknowledged by Bloomfield, *Recent. Synop.* For to sustain the ordinary interpretation of apostolic ordination, he makes use of the following assumption unwarranted by any construction of the Greek language. “As *καὶ προσευξαμένοι* is to be referred to the apostles, the *καὶ* (and) has the force of the pronoun relative, as in *Mark ii. 15.*”*

But nothing is more unjustifiable than this assertion, it being subversive of every principle of grammar to give a conjunction the sense of a pronoun.

The forced construction of Bloomfield, however, is a direct admission of the correctness of the translation given by my Catholic friend, for Bloomfield thus admits that the imposition of hands was *the act of the Greek Jews, and not of the apostles*, unless his violation of all grammatical construction can be sustained by making *καὶ*, the conjunction *and*, stand for the relative pronoun *who*. This however I presume neither he nor any one else can justify, but at any rate until the opponents of this criticism shall give their authorities for such violent rendering of the words, we shall contend for the accuracy of the translation as I have stated it.†

* I am wholly at a loss to understand why this reference has been made, for it has no connection whatever with the subject. It may perhaps be a typographical misprint.

† In case any one may be perplexed by the supposition that our argument on the ordination of deacons conflicts with the observation made by the apostles (*Acts vi. 3,*) “*whom we may appoint,*” &c. I beg leave to remark that I understand the

Furthermore, whatever may be the true interpretation of the passage, it is perfectly clear that this laying on of hands was not an *ecclesiastical ordination*, if that implies a communication of grace by *such imposition*, for these seven deacons had been expressly selected for their office in the fact, that they were already qualified as being full of the *Holy Ghost and wisdom*.—*Acts vi. 3.*

Their ordination therefore was merely a public designation that these individuals were entrusted with the superintendence of the *temporal concern of the Greek Jews* in the distribution of the common funds.

The circumstance of the people laying their hands on persons who were to exercise an official position among them is recognized on a very important occasion in Jewish history. In *Num. viii. 10, 11*, we have these words: “And thou shall bring the levites before Jehovah, and the children of Israel shall put their hands upon the levites. And Aaron shall offer the levites before Jehovah for an offering of the children of Israel, that they (the levites) may execute the service of Jehovah.”

Whether the Greek Jews in selecting the seven persons called deacons, may have been influenced by the Jewish precedent or not we have no means of judging. In our estimate it was not unsuitable which is all we can venture to say on the matter.

The reader in estimating the exposition I have made on this subject, must not allow the prescription of the ordinary interpretation to influence his judgment, for the question is not to be determined by after practices of the christian churches. As the phrase *laying on of hands* occurs in the above instance for the first time in the New Testament, no precedent can be referred to, and hence we can only be governed in making a conclusion by the grammatical construction of the phraseology, which must not be perverted to make it sustain an ecclesiastical hypothesis, and especially so as the whole subject of *clerical ordination* is an exceedingly controverted subject.

After the appointment of the seven deacons, as they are called, there is nothing said in the Acts that has any bearing upon church officers or church government until chap. xi. 30, which simply mentions that a collection in money for the relief of their poor brethren in Judea was paid over to the *elders* by Barnabas and Paul.

expression *we*, not to mean the apostles exclusively, but as implying the whole brotherhood. Such a phrase is very common among ourselves; we hear public speakers continually say let *us, we* will, or *we* ought, to do so and so.

In *Acts* xiv. 23, we find that Paul and Barnabas in the discharge of a particular ministry that had been assigned them by the church at Antioch, are reported to have ordained *elders* (presbuteroi) in all the churches established by them. As this is the first place in which we read of the ordination of elders or presbyters we will quote the entire passage.

“And when they had preached the gospel to that city, (Derbe) and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. *And when they had ordained them elders* (presbuteroi) *in every church*, and had prayed with fasting, they commanded them to the Lord on whom they believed.”

By this passage, for the first time since the day of pentecost, or about seventeen years after that event, we find that at some time during that interval, that churches had been established among the Gentiles, and that certain persons under the name of elders or presbyters had been ordained in every congregation. But what we are to understand by the terms *elder*, or *ordain*,* is not signified in the least degree.

Allowing others to make what inferences they please from this passage, I contend there is nothing here stated that is any wise inconsistent with my exposition page 184, as to what is done in the constituting a class leader among the Methodists, *viz.* that the apostles merely designated laymen among their converts who exercised a superintendence over their life and morals, and led their religious services when they met together for purposes of edification.

In *Acts* xv. 1, &c. which relates an occurrence that took place about twenty-three years after Christ’s ascension, we find Paul and

*The Greek word here translated “ordained” is *χειροτονησαντες*, which literally signifies *constituted by hands*. But what is the true import of the Greek term? Some critics consider it implies an election on the part of the congregation who *elevated their hands* as testifying their approbation of certain persons nominated to them as their elders or leaders. That such a form of election was common among the Greeks see *Herman’s Manl. Greek Antig. chap. vi. sec. 130 and note. Smith, Dict. Greek and Rom. Antig. art. Cheirotonia. Dr. Adam Clarke, note on Acts xiv. 23.* Other critics contend that the ordination above mentioned was effected by an imposition of the hands of Paul and Barnabas, who as members of a divine ecclesiastical corporation thus conveyed a spiritual authority to the persons ordained as elders or presbyters. This opinion however is overstrained, for the very same Greek word is used in *2 Cor. viii. 19* to express one “*chosen of the churches*” to travel with Paul, &c. No one therefore has any right to assume an ecclesiastical technicality as the meaning of the word until the subject be more perfectly scrutinized.

Barnabas were sent to Jerusalem to consult the “apostles and *elders*,” (presbuteroi) concerning the necessity of observing the rite of circumcision. The 4th and 6th verses of this chapter evidently recognize the apostles and elders as conjointly constituting a tribunal to whose authority the body of christians at large respectfully submitted the points in controversy. We might have anticipated the concession of such authority to the apostles, but who were these *elders* (presbuteroi) thus expressly associated with them in this ruling council? Were they persons ecclesiastically ordained to this office, or were they merely respectable or influential persons acting in the primitive sense of the term *elders* (zokonem) as wise or experienced laymen of acknowledged piety and influence. (See Vol. I. 136.) It is most probable the last supposition is correct, for the determination of the assembly on the points submitted to them, (*Acts xv. 22, 23,*) is given in the combined names of “*the apostles, and elders, and brethren,*” *i. e.* of the whole church at Jerusalem. Such a proceeding has none of the peculiarities of an ecclesiastical council or corporation, for if the brethren or whole membership be thus included in the determination given, then certainly the enumeration of *the elders* in the same act, cannot determine whether they are to be regarded in a civil or ecclesiastical capacity. That the term was used at this time among the Jews in a civil sense, is plainly inferrable from Paul’s observation (*Acts xxii. 5*) that he went to Damascus with authority from the high priest *and all the estate of the elders, &c.* (presbuterion.)—See also *Math. xxvi. 59; xxvii. 1.*

In the seventeenth verse of *Acts xx.* we again meet with a fact shewing an organization of christian churches under the direction of elders. This passage, together with verse 28, is of some importance in the controversy concerning Diocesan Episcopacy, for those persons termed in the seventeenth verse *elders*, (presbuteroi,) are the very same individuals that in the 28th verse are called *overseers*, but which ought to have been rendered *bishops*, (episcopoi,) as our translators have done every where else, but as this would have justified the objections made in those days against their episcopal hypothesis, they have evasively employed another word which though literally correct, is not so in a technical sense. In other words, they were guilty of a *suppressio veri*, *i. e.* they told the truth, but not the honest truth.*

* It is a matter worthy of remembrance, that the only text in the ancient Syriac version of the New Testament, in which the term *bishop* occurs, is this very verse. See *Murdock Transl. Syriac New Testament, in loco.*

It is a further argument against Diocesan Episcopacy that both the seventeenth and twenty-eighth verses of this chapter recognize several *elders* or *bishops* as attached to the church at Ephesus, which is directly contrary to the hypothesis that there was but one bishop to a diocese.

I apprehend we derive a strong objection against the theory that the apostles had established any divine corporation of ecclesiastics as the “*church*” at this time, from what is communicated to us in the twenty-ninth and thirty-first verses of *Acts* xx. Paul there expressly says, that “grievous wolves would hereafter appear among them not sparing the flock. *Also of your own selves*,” (i. e. of the bishops or elders,) “shall men arise *speaking perverse things* to draw away disciples after them. Therefore *watch and remember that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one, night and day, with tears.*”

Yet notwithstanding this annunciation, Paul does not make the least reference to any ecclesiastical corporation or church, with whom the truth might be supposed to be found, or to whom they should have recourse amidst the confusion that would hereafter be the result of different elders or bishops preaching “*perverse things*.” It is therefore seemingly incredible that Paul could at this time have recognized any divinely appointed body of clergy to instruct mankind with authority, for if he had, he never could have omitted to declare the remedy when he foretold the mischief that would surely come.

In *Acts* xxi. 17, 18, Paul is stated to have arrived at Jerusalem, “and the day following Paul went in with us unto James, and *all the elders* (presbuteroi) were present.” If there is any force in words, these imply that the christian church was not governed by the apostles exclusively, but that a body of *elders* was associated with them. Under what peculiarities of organization this council was constituted, we know not, but they evidently had authority at least to recommend what pertained to religious practice, and it is equally evident they had not yet organized themselves into a society based upon the peculiarities of christian institutions and appointments, though it was now thirty-one years since our Saviour’s ascension to heaven. They still continued zealous in the observance of the Jewish ceremonial law, and even induced Paul to assist in a Nazarite purification, which I must acknowledge I do not comprehend how he could participate in consistently with his avowed opinions and practice elsewhere.

After this time there is nothing related in the Acts that has any bearing on the subject of church officers or christian ecclesiastical institutions.

Agreeably to the plan laid down on page 186, we shall now examine the Epistles of Paul wherever he speaks of the officers or institutions observed in the christian churches of his day, that we may be able to determine the question whether the church stands upon the foundation of a divinely appointed constitution formally established by Christ or his apostles, or whether it be only the result of expediencies adopted by pious persons as the best mode they could select for the edification of their disciples. In conducting this examination of Paul's Epistles I shall take them up in their chronological order as estimated by learned men, instead of following that confused arrangement in which they stand in our translation of the New Testament.

It is commonly regarded by Biblical critics that the two Epistles to the Thessalonians were the earliest of Paul's writings, and that they were composed about A. D. 52, or about twenty years after our Saviour's ascension.

The first Epistle to the Thessalonians is written in the name of Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, "to the church of the Thessalonians," *i. e.* to the congregation directly, and is continued in the same plural address to them throughout. In chapter v. 12, 14, however, they commend to the congregation certain persons who must be considered to stand in an ecclesiastical position among them, "and we beseech you brethren to know," (*i. e.* regard with affection,) "them which labor among you and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love, for their work's sake." As Paul says nothing about such persons having a divine commission, which would have been very suitable for him to have noticed on this occasion, I think the direct inference is they had no such appointment. But however this may be, the language of the Epistle is fully as applicable to the mere leaders of a prayer meeting who were zealous in the christian cause, and this being the case no one certainly has a right to assume that a divinely constituted ministry is implied.

The second Epistle to the Thessalonians was written by the same persons, in the same year as the first Epistle, but it contains no passage that has any reference to our present investigation.

Paul's Epistle to the Galatians was written also in the year A. D. 52. It contains no formal direction concerning the constitution of christian churches, but it has an important bearing on the subject in

the fact, that this epistle was written to counteract the influence of some Judaizing preachers of Christianity, who had opposed the doctrines taught by Paul concerning the uselessness of observing the law of Moses. Who these persons were we have not the smallest means of ascertaining, but we make two very important inferences from the facts stated; *first*, that there could have been no established systematic exposition of the doctrines of Christianity previous to this time, in contradistinction to the Mosaic institutions; and *secondly*, that the apostles could not have been regarded by the christian brethren as a divine corporation established by Christ to legislate for the church, for had this been the case we cannot suppose Paul would have forbore to press the authority of the apostolic body upon the minds of the Galatians, as sustaining him in the doctrines he had taught them, and as opposing those persons against whom he wrote this epistle.

The next epistle of Paul was written to the Corinthians about A. D. 57, or about twenty-four years after Christ had left the apostles. The first epistle was sent to the church (*i. e.* the congregation) in the joint names of Paul and Sosthenes. To fully appreciate the important testimony to be derived from *1 Corinthians*, a few prefatory remarks are necessary. In *Acts xviii. 1-11*, an account is given of the arrival of Paul at Corinth, where he successfully preached the gospel under the encouragement of a vision from the Lord Jesus, who informed him he had "much people in this city." Paul remained there a year and six months, and established a church or congregation in that city, as we must necessarily presume under all the institutions, rites and ceremonies that characterized a truly christian church; for his visit to Corinth took place about A. D. 54 or 55, which is about *twenty-two years* after Christ is supposed to have given full instructions to the apostles on such subjects. We apprehend therefore it is impossible but that all things pertaining to the organization of the church at Corinth must have been established by Paul in the perfection of apostolical institutions.

Let us now examine this first epistle to the Corinthians, which according to the received chronology was written A. D. 56, *i. e. two years after Paul had personally organized their church.* That the Corinthians had faithfully obeyed the formal injunctions of the apostle, is evident from *chap. xi. 2.* "*Now I praise you brethren that ye remember me in all things and keep the ordinances as I delivered them to you.*" In the very next verse however, he commences with a censure upon a practice that had arisen among them

of women preaching to or exhorting the congregation. This he condemns as a matter highly unbecoming in a woman, but not one word does he say against it as being a breach of any ecclesiastical organization established by him only *two years before*. And indeed how can we suppose such an usurpation of ecclesiastical functions could possibly have taken place, if the apostle had previously ordained bishops or presbyters as a class of men divinely constituted for the exclusive office of instructing the people in their religious obligations. The inference therefore is irrefragable, that the church officers at Corinth whether as bishops, presbyters, or deacons, held no ecclesiastical office under a divine commission, with such powers as are commonly conceded to them. They evidently had no greater authority than the leaders of a lay prayer meeting have with us at the present time.

This argument receives a further confirmation by the instructions given by the apostle to the *Corinthians* in the 12th and 14th chapters; for, after enumerating the various spiritual gifts that God had conferred upon different members of the congregation, which were to be exercised to the common edification, he specifies the persons possessing these gifts to be “*first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers*, after that *miracles*, then *gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.*” But not a single word does he say concerning bishops, presbyters, or deacons, by which eminent omission we plainly discern the absurdity of supposing that such persons could have been regarded by the apostles as a divinely organized body appointed for the religious government of the church. He then gives some instructions as to how persons should exercise their spiritual gifts, he expostulates with them concerning the disorderly manner in which their church exercises had been conducted, he then gives particular directions as to how *the prophets* should exercise their gifts, and expressly forbids *women to preach in the church.* All these expostulations or directions are so manifestly contradictory to the theory of an organized clergy having been ordained to exercise ecclesiastical functions in christian churches, that it ought to be wholly unnecessary to enlarge further on the subject; but as there is such an amount of misconception in the christian world respecting the original institution of church assemblies, we deem it expedient to exhibit the reasoning of the apostle at full length.

The object of church meetings, and the mode in which their religious exercises were conducted in the times of the apostles are most clearly exhibited to us in this epistle to the *Corinthians*, and

which nothing but the erroneous ideas which christians have attached to the terms *prophet*, and *prophesying*, have prevented them from perceiving in all distinctness.

We have already shewn (Vol. I. 203, &c.) that the word *prophet* merely signifies a religious or moral *teacher or exhorter*, and not a foreteller of future events, nor one necessarily inspired of Jehovah to announce some particular revelation. Such things indeed were done from time to time by the prophets, but they were not termed prophets on that account. It was because they were prophets, that Jehovah made use of them either to announce some future event or to make some communication from him to mankind. The ordinary misconception of christians respecting the true character of those persons called prophets in the Scripture is the less excusable, since the apostle Paul in this very epistle has given the clearest illustration of the whole subject. Recognizing therefore the term prophet to signify only a person who *exhorted or who taught by exhortation*; and prophesying to mean nothing else than the *act of exhorting*, we shall find in the first epistle to the Corinthians (chaps. xii. xiii. xiv.) a clear exhibition by the apostle Paul as to what was the object of a christian assembly, and how its exercises were essentially conducted.

In chap. xii. the apostle speaks of the variety of spiritual gifts possessed by different christian believers, but which however diversified he refers them all to the grace of God, as having been bestowed upon individuals to be exercised to the general edification of the whole membership. He illustrates the position thus taken, by a comparison of these various spiritual gifts to the different members of a man's body, each of which in its particular function is essential to the perfect action of that physical organization which constitutes the man. After this comparison the apostle urges upon the Corinthians that no one ought to be puffed up by any supposed superiority of spiritual gift over others whom they might consider of less excellency of spiritual endowments. For, according to the illustration previously urged upon them, that every function of the natural body was alike essential to the health and vigor of the whole organization of the man, so the intellectual and spiritual power of each individual was in like manner essential to the spiritual welfare of the whole brotherly community.

In chap. xiii. he magnifies the principle of christian *love*, or charity as rendered in our Bibles, over all spiritual gifts whatever, for he observes that without this love or charity such gifts were

nothing more than the mere ringing sound of a brazen instrument of music.

In chap. xiv. he continues his discourse by urging them to perfect themselves in that love which he so greatly extols, admitting at the same time it was also very reasonable, that they should desire spiritual gifts. Of these gifts he especially recommends in preference "that ye may prophesy," *i. e.* exhort in a powerful and effectual manner. The apostle then compares the importance of the gift of being enabled to speak a variety of languages, with the one by which a person was enabled to prophesy, *i. e.* exhort an assembly of believers, and he largely insists upon the superiority of the latter, by saying, that though he spoke more languages than any one of the Corinthian christians, yet in a congregation of believers he had rather speak five words to the instruction of those present, than to be able to speak ten thousand words in languages which the audience did not understand.

He then returns to the subject of prophesying, which it is impossible to interpret in any other sense than the mere act of exhorting, or of teaching by exhortation.—See chap. xiv. 22—25.

The apostle then reproves certain irregularities in their manner of prophesying, whereby confusion was sometimes occasioned by the over anxiety of different individuals to occupy the attention of the assembly: "how is it then brethren, when ye come together," (*i. e.* to your church or place of religious assembly,) "every one of you hath a psalm, a doctrine, a tongue, a revelation, an interpretation," (*i. e.* something or other which they individually desired to press on the consideration of the assembly,) "let all things," says he, "be done to edifying."

He then instructs them as to the manner in which the prophets (*i. e.* those who exhorted) should exercise their gifts, and forbids any one to speak in any other language than that understood by the audience, unless there should be some one present who would interpret it to them in their own tongue. Then follows a direction that only two or three prophets (*i. e.* exhorters) should speak at any one meeting, and that some other person or prophet should finally *judge*, *i. e.* should make a practical application of what had been said by the several speakers, or correct any thing that had fallen from them which required correction.*

* This practice of several persons preaching or exhorting during the time of a christian assembly, was preserved a long time afterwards in christian churches. The rule by which different persons were to speak, in the second or third century, is laid down in the *Apostol. Constit. lib. ii. chap. 57*: "Let the presbyters, one by

From what is said in the thirtieth verse, "if any thing be revealed to another (prophet) that sitteth by, let the first (prophet) hold his peace," the theologians have commonly attempted to get rid of the authority of this chapter as shewing how religious assemblies were conducted in the days of the apostles, by asserting that the meetings above mentioned were not ordinary church assemblies, but of really inspired men under extraordinary influences, and as such, peculiar only to the apostolic age.

But there is nothing to justify such an interpretation, for though the language of the apostle is a little perplexed by the term "revealed," yet the context evidently shews there was no inspiration in the case, for, says he, "by observing such conduct as he commended to them, *ye may all prophesy one by one*, that all may learn, and all may be comforted."

The evident sense of the thirtieth verse therefore is, as substantially paraphrased by Macknight on the Epistles, "if any thing be revealed," (or more properly, *be suggested*,) "to another prophet, or person sitting by, let the first hold his peace," (*i. e. let him finish his discourse before the other attempts to speak*,) "for by thus waiting for each other, all may prophesy in turn," &c. That this is the true interpretation, must be evident from the manifest absurdity of supposing that the Spirit of God would reveal something to one prophet, which required him to interrupt another prophet then speaking under the influences of the same spirit. The observation of Paul is directly opposed to such a notion, for he immediately adds, "the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets," *i. e.* that they can control themselves as not being under any divine *afflatus* that compels them to speak whether they will or not; for as he rationally observes, "God is not the author of confusion," (as would result from such supposed conflicting influences,) "but of peace as in all (other) churches of the saints." He then concludes his exhortation on the subject, with, "let all things be done decently and in order."*

one, but not all, speak the word of exhortation to the people, and last of all the bishop," &c. See also *Bingham, Antiq. Christ. Church, lib. xiv. chap. 4*, who refers to Chrysostom, Basil, Greg. Nysen. Theodoret, Augustine, and Jerome as all testifying to such a practice.

* Notwithstanding these clear directions of the apostle Paul, as to the spirit and manner in which a preacher ought to address himself to a christian audience, we are continually scandalized with the vociferation, angry looks, and violent gesticulation with which some ministers of the gospel express themselves on any subject which they see fit to patronize. Such men, half crazy with their arrogated orthodoxy and natural intolerance, are pleased to justify their conduct under the com-

Deeming what has been said upon this subject to be sufficiently clear, we now return to our more proper discourse as confuting the idea that any clergy or divinely constituted body of ecclesiastics are any where recognized in the Epistle to the Corinthians.

We learn from *1 Corinth.* xi. 20, &c. that the Corinthians celebrated the commemoration of the Lord's supper in an irreverent manner without a proper discernment of the object of the institution. Paul therefore censures their practice in that particular and instructs them concerning its import. But if Paul had appointed bishops, presbyters, or deacons, only *two years previously*, to the exclusive function of administering the sacraments, as our clergy arrogate to themselves, the apostle's censure would have been directed to the ecclesiastics who had permitted such gross irregularities to prevail in the church, for they only would have been to blame. Or, if it be supposed, though such a notion is incredible, that the people had borne down their ministers, and forced them to comply with their innovations, then surely Paul would have justified the ministers, and censured the people for their disobedience to those who had been expressly appointed under the institution of Christ to this exclusive function. There is nothing however said in this Epistle that gives the least countenance to any such supposition, but on the contrary, every inference that common sense can deduce from the statements made, are that as the Corinthians had "kept Paul's ordinances," (1 *Cor.* xi. 2,) so his omission to censure a clergy in this matter, shews that no organization of clergy or ministers of the gospel as a divinely constituted body, could possi-

placent assumption that they are of that class of preachers whom our Lord designated as *Boanerges*, or "sons of thunder." Our Saviour's words however admit of no such application. The word *Boanerges* itself, is of very uncertain signification, though it has undoubtedly a reference to the phenomenon of lightning, probably as to its penetrating and intense action. But that the term has no connection with noise or denunciation, may be safely inferred from the persons to whom our Lord applied the term. (*Mark* iii. 17.) Though we are unable to state the personal character of the apostle James, yet it must essentially have accorded with that of John's, since the term "sons of thunder," designated them both. What then was the character of the apostle John? That of being the gentlest and most amiable among our Saviour's disciples. One whose writings only express love and tenderness, and whose very last words, as related by tradition, were consonant with all the history of his previous life.

How then can a christian audience tolerate a term bestowed by Christ upon the gentle spirit of "loving John," to be assumed by one, who, in delivering his arrogant opinions, at the same time splits the ears of all near him by intonations of voice, vehement gesticulation, stamping, and clapping of hands, that are only in keeping with a colonel of grenadiers storming a breach at the head of his regiment.

bly have existed at Corinth in a church established by the apostle Paul *twenty-two years* after Christ had ascended to heaven.

The Epistle to the Romans is commonly supposed to have been written about A. D. 57 or 58. It is addressed by Paul in his individual character as an apostle, to the whole christian congregation at Rome, whom he commends for their faith as a matter spoken of throughout the whole empire. After an elaborate exposition of certain principles of the Christian Dispensation, he then in chap. xii. 6, &c. addresses himself to the whole brotherhood, and exhorts them to exercise their various gifts in an orderly manner to a common edification. In chap. xiii. 1—7, he expressly requires the congregation to be obedient to the heathen magistracy. But he takes no notice whatever of any church officers, or of any reverence to which they were entitled. Special mention by name is made in the last chapter of the many individuals, female as well as male, who had exerted themselves in promoting the christian cause. The first one mentioned is a woman named Phebe, who is styled in our translation *a servant*, but who according to the manner in which the noun masculine has been translated in other places, ought to have been rendered *a deaconess*, an officer, or rather a function that was distinctly recognized in the earlier ages of Christianity, but which gradually disappeared under the increasing corruptions of after times. It is a most singular circumstance however, if there had been any ecclesiastical establishment at Rome at this time, that Paul should have omitted to remember such persons when he specially commends himself to twenty-eight private individuals whether men or women, by name.

I think we have therefore the fairest reason to believe that this church at Rome had been established on the prayer meeting scheme, (see page 183,) by pious individuals who had brought with them the principles of Christianity to the imperial city, for with such a supposition the epistle to them accords perfectly, at the same time that it is wholly at variance with the supposition that there was any ecclesiastical organization of divine appointment then recognized in the church at Rome.

The second epistle to the Corinthians was written A. D. 58, a year after the former letter. There is nothing said in this epistle that has any direct bearing on the subject of our present investigation. We could make some strong inferences from indirect passages, but as we apprehend we have a sufficient amount of evidence to produce from those that are direct, it is not deemed necessary to accumulate proofs less forcible in their application.

Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians was composed about A. D. 61, or *twenty-eight years* after Christ had given his last instructions to his apostles. This letter is addressed to the whole congregation at Ephesus, who were converted Gentiles. Among the various matters of doctrinal instruction communicated to them, Paul intermingles other matters that concerned them as a mere congregation of believers in the gospel. Thus he reminds them (chap. iv. 7—12) “that *unto every one of us* is given grace according to the measure (*i. e.* the nature or kind) *of the gift of Christ*. And he gave some (*i. e.* qualified them to be) *apostles*, and some *prophets*, and some *evangelists*, and some *pastors and teachers*, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,” &c. But he says not a word concerning *bishops*, *presbyters*, and *deacons*, which is totally irreconcilable with the hypothesis that these were then the divinely constituted officers of the church. This omission to enumerate them is still more striking in the fact, that he specially reminds *husbands, wives, parents, children, masters and servants*, of their relative duties to each other. The inferences to be thus deduced are therefore directly conclusive against the supposition of any clerical organization in the church at this time as a divine institution.

The Epistle to the Philippians, written about A. D. 62 or 63, *i. e.* about thirty years after our Saviour's ascension, was sent in the conjoined names of Paul and Timothy, to the congregation at Philippi, together with “*the bishops* (episcopoi) *and deacons*.” This epistle stands alone in this address as specifying the bishops or deacons, and even in that particular it is to be remarked that except in the bare mention of them in the first salutation there is no farther notice taken of them, and not the most distant allusion is made concerning their office or functions. If the apostle had considered them to be ministers of Christ set apart by a divine institution as the spiritual governors of the church at Philippi, it is utterly inconceivable why he should have omitted either to exhort them to the discharge of their divine functions, or to have instructed the people that they should reverence them in their divine commissions. But as nothing has been said by the apostles on these particulars, we can only regard the terms “*bishops and deacons*” to have been applied to the heads or leaders of the christian community at Philippi, in the consuetudinary phrase of the times, as significant of their mere position as the leaders or officers of a prayer meeting, and not as being so from any divine appointment. The omission to mention any divine body of clergy, if such existed at Philippi, is

the more remarkable, as Paul was so attentive to minute things as to send an apostolic exhortation (chap. iv. 2) to two women in this congregation who had some misunderstanding between them, and to "*beseech them to be of the same mind.*" He also entreats some person or other among them by the term of "*true yoke fellow,*" to help *those women which labored with me in the gospel*, (*i. e.* who had assisted him in its propagation) with Clement also, and with other my fellow-laborers whose names are in the book of life.

That the apostle after this close attention to the concerns of individuals, should entirely omit to say something either direct or indirect upon so important a matter as a divinely appointed clergy, if such had been established at the time, I apprehend is conclusive that no such institution existed.

We may further remark on the present occasion, that be the office or functions of bishop (*episcopoi*) and deacons what they may, it is evident from the salutation given them in the first chapter that bishops (*episcopoi*) and presbyters (*presbuteroi*) are synonymous, for it is not *bishop* in the singular number, but in the plural as signifying several. The passage therefore as such is an argument against the episcopal hypothesis which implies always only one bishop to a diocese, and not several in one congregation. Nothing however is more evident than that the terms bishop and presbyter or elder are used synonymously throughout the New Testament. Not only are the terms used convertibly in the same chapters, but we never find them used distinctly; that is to say, mention is made of bishops and deacons, or of presbyters and deacons; but there is not a single passage in the New Testament that speaks of bishops, elders and deacons conjointly, thus affording the clearest evidence, that let their institution be what it may, there were only two classes of officers or leaders recognized in the church during the times of the apostles.

The Epistle to the Colossians was sent in the names of Paul and Timothy to the christians at Colosse about A. D. 62, *i. e.* about thirty years after Christ had his last interview with his apostles, when our clergy suppose he gave them full instructions concerning the future constitution of the church.

In this epistle, which is formally addressed to the whole congregation, there is no salutation made to any supposed ecclesiastical authorities; but mention is made in chap. i. 7 of "*Epaphras our dear fellow servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ.*" The word minister is the translation of the Greek word *diakonos*, which may be either *deacon* in the ecclesiastical, or *minister or servant* in

an ordinary sense, for Paul, in the twenty-third and twenty-fifth verses of this same chapter, says of himself, "whereof I, Paul, am made a minister," (*διάκονος*.) Now certainly as the apostle did not mean to say that he was technically speaking *a deacon*, we have no reason whatever to regard Epaphras in any other light than a leader or minister in a lay prayer meeting.

In the conclusion of the epistle, Paul gives advice specially to wives, husbands, children, fathers, masters, servants, as to their relative duties; and then to sundry individuals, among others "Nymphas and the *church*, (*εκκλησίαν* i. e. the congregation) which is in his house," which we have no reason to suppose had any organization other than a prayer meeting. A special caution is also addressed to a person of the name of Archippus, "Take heed to the *ministry* (*διάκονιαν*) which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it." As we have already spoken of this term it is unnecessary to say any thing further on the subject. The application of it to the leader of a prayer or class meeting, is *prima facie*, just as reasonable as to assume it designates a member of the clerical body. Which hypothesis is the more consistent with the general statements made in the Scripture the reader can determine for himself.

Paul's Epistle to Philemon, though a mere private letter to an individual, still affords us some inferences that tend to confirm our general views of the condition of christian society in the apostolic age. This Epistle, supposed to have been written about A. D. 62, was addressed to a citizen of Colosse by the name of Philemon, and a female called Apphia, presumably his wife, and also to the "*church in thy house*."

In this recognition of a church in a private house, and no mention being made of any divinely constituted church officer, I apprehend we have no reason to consider it otherwise than an assembly of christians united together on the principle of either a lay prayer meeting or that of a Methodist class. Such an inference is consistent with the language of the Epistle, and which offers no justification for regarding it as a church constituted on ecclesiastical principles.

The conclusion of the Epistle also exhibits Paul's opinion respecting those individuals who ordinarily were associated with him, "There salute thee Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, *my fellow laborers*."

The next Epistle of Paul in chronological order, is the First Epistle to Timothy, which is commonly supposed to have been

written about A. D. 64, *i. e.* about thirty-one years after the ascension of Christ to heaven.

Timothy was a disciple of Paul's, whom he had converted at Derbe or Lystra, (*Acts* xvi. i. &c.) about A. D. 53. He afterwards attended Paul in his itinerant journeys as an assistant minister, and is associated with him in many of his addresses to various christian communities. This was giving a very high position to Timothy in the estimation of the christian world, but more especially so with the immediate converts made by Paul. There is not, however, the smallest authority in the New Testament to regard Timothy in any other light than as one of the confidential associates of Paul, who as being fully instructed in the doctrines preached by him, was therefore qualified to carry on the ministry of the gospel in those places where Paul had not leisure to mature the system of things he may have commenced. The advocates of diocesan episcopacy have labored hard to establish the belief that Timothy was addressed by Paul in this epistle as a bishop in their sense of the term, but for this opinion there is not the least authority as we shall presently shew.

The First Epistle to Timothy is from Paul, who on going to Macedonia requested him to remain at Ephesus, purporting to return again as is implied by chap. iv. 13, "Till I come," &c. and to enforce among the christians of that city the doctrines that had been previously inculcated by Paul. Some confusion and distraction had evidently arisen among them in consequence of disputes among the religious leaders or instructors of the people, for Paul in chap. i. 6, 7, says, "some having swerved, have turned aside unto vain jangling; desiring to be teachers of the law, (*i. e.* of Moses) understanding neither what they say nor whereof they affirm." I think we may safely presume that these teachers could not have been a legally constituted ministry, otherwise Paul would have directed them to be silenced or suspended, but as nothing of this kind is suggested to Timothy, it follows that these false teachers were laymen. But then again our argument is equally cogent against the existence of a divinely constituted clergy at Ephesus, if we consider these "*janglers*" to have been laymen, for the inference is direct that if there had been any clerical body at Ephesus, the apostle would have referred to them as persons properly ordained to teach what was the truth in contradistinction to the *janglers*, and thus put an end to the confusion. Paul, however, makes no such reference, neither does he give any ecclesiastical authority to Timothy to silence such persons, he simply instructs him to counter-

act false teachers by preaching the doctrines that Paul had taught him.

In further evidence against the supposition that there was any ecclesiastical organization of clergy at Ephesus at this time, I remark that Paul says, chap. ii. 12, "*I suffer not a woman to teach.*" The apostle speaks in the singular number, "*I Paul* do not suffer a woman to teach," &c. Now had there been any ecclesiastical organization of clergymen established either by Christ or the apostles prior to this time, would Paul have used such a phrase. Did not the emergency require him to have said, "*We the apostles by the appointment of Christ do not suffer*, i. e. do not allow a woman to preach. But instead of such an observation, Paul's argument against women undertaking to teach, is deduced from the mere natural inferiority of the woman to the man, nor does he give the slightest hint there was any breach of ecclesiastical ordinance by this impropriety. Neither is it impertinent to add that it is utterly incredible the people of Ephesus thirty years after the ascension of Christ, should be so ignorant of the true constitution of the christian church as not to know that women ought not to teach, had any form of church organization been previously established among them by apostolic authority.

In chap. iii. the apostle gives Timothy some instructions concerning the general moral qualifications of those who should be selected for the office of *bishop*, (episcopos) which it is no longer controverted is here used synonymously for *elder* or *presbyter*. Again with the *deacons*, they are to be selected for their moral qualities, but not one word is said either as to bishops or deacons becoming members of an ecclesiastical corporation in virtue of their ordination, which I cannot understand why the apostle should have forbore to mention if he had recognized any such institution; for the occasion manifestly required it, whether as calling the attention of the bishops and deacons to their official responsibility, or as instructing the people as to the fact, that these persons held their appointments under the sanction of a divine commission.

There is, however, a very important omission in our English Bibles, in the enumeration of the persons whom Timothy was instructed by Paul *to ordain*, which is but slightly noticed by commentators, and is universally disregarded by those persons who have been engaged in controversies on the subject of the clerical organization of the christian church. I therefore request the particular attention of the reader to the 11th verse of the above chapter, which I shall quote as printed in our common translation as

shewing the supplied words, (*in italics*,) which our translators have added to the text. "Even so *must their wives*." (*i. e.* the wives of the deacons.) "be grave, not slanderous, sober, faithful in all things."

By having rendered the Greek word ($\gamma\gamma\gamma\alpha\kappa\alpha\zeta$) *wives*, which is only one sense of that word, and by having inserted the relative pronoun *their*, our translators have represented the apostle to merely admonish the *wives of the deacons* as to the propriety of their external conduct.

The Vulgate translates the Greek word by *mulieres*, which is literally rendered by the Douay translators, *women*, by which they evidently intended to imply that the exhortation of the apostle was addressed generally to *all women* professing Christianity.

But though these translators, both Catholic and Protestant, have availed themselves of the ambiguity of the Greek term, which in that language as well as in the Hebrew, French, &c. is used indifferently to imply either *a wife* in particular, or *a woman* in the general sense; yet there can be no doubt in the mind of any reasonable man acquainted with ecclesiastical antiquities, that the apostle meant neither *wife* nor *woman*, but used the terms in an adjective sense as designating those female officers known in the primitive church as *deaconesses*. As the correct appreciation of this fact is of the greatest importance towards estimating the true ecclesiastical character of those persons mentioned in the New Testament as *bishops* or *presbyters*, and *deacons*, we shall more particularly investigate the meaning of the above mentioned verse, as well as illustrate it by some information respecting the *deaconesses* in primitive times, of whom little is known at present by the ordinary readers of the New Testament.

The observations of Dr. Bloomfield, a very learned clergyman of the church of England, on the meaning of the word $\gamma\gamma\gamma\alpha\kappa\alpha\zeta$ in 1st Tim. iii. 11, are sufficiently full for the most part as shewing the sense of the passage, I therefore shall quote his *Recensio Synoptica* viii. 239, which is further strengthened by the various authorities referred to by him.

"On what we are to understand by $\gamma\gamma\gamma\alpha\kappa\alpha\zeta$ commentors are not agreed. Most modern ones think *the wives of deacons* are meant. But to this it is with reason objected, that if so, it is strange nothing should have been said of the duties of *bishop's wives*, which were yet of greater consequence. I therefore agree with the ancients, (commentators,) and of the moderns, Menochius, Grotius, Benson, Hardy, Macknight, Valpy, &c. that we are here to understand *deaconesses*; an order mentioned at *Romans* xvi. 1, and (as The-

ophylact observes) very useful and necessary to the church. If (adds he) these were not meant, why should any mention have been introduced of women among what was said of deacons? Besides I would add, the very epithets *τεμνας grare*, *νηστειαν sober*, *μη διαζολους* not slanderers, and *πιστους* faithful, (two of which are applied to the bishops,) seem far more suitable to *deaconesses*, than *deacon's wives*. Assuredly the *usus loquendi* permits the word to be taken as well of *women*, (i. e. *deaconesses*) as *wives*. And the argument that 'the apostle would have expressed his meaning more clearly' is in a writer like St. Paul of little weight. Others object that these (the *deaconesses*) are mentioned at *chap. v.* but they are there only *alluded to*. And surely in a question like this, *the united voice of early antiquity* founded on tradition or ancient written information unknown to us, carries with it authority which it were unwise to reject."

A more common book however, Macknight on the epistles, (*Romans* xvi. 1 and 2, and *1st Tim.* iii. 11,) will give the reader a good general view of the sense of the above verses, as well as concerning the office of the *deaconess*.

But in order to obtain a more perfect comprehension of the apostolic institution of the *deaconesses*, it will be necessary to look a little further into this epistle to Timothy, for we shall find in an ensuing chapter, that it gives us ample information as to the fact of the official position of the *deaconesses* in the christian congregations which Timothy was directed to organize. Paul, after having spoken in the third chapter of bishops, deacons, and as we have shewn also of *deaconesses*, as official persons in christian congregations, then digresses, as is not unusual with him on other occasions. In the fifth chapter he returns to the subject concerning the *deaconesses*, and enlarges on it in such manner as is equivalent to a formal recognition of their official character. He however there speaks of them by the synonymous term *widow*, which was perfectly well recognized as such by the early ecclesiastical writers.

In this discourse however, he speaks of *widows* in a two-fold manner, one of which is in the ordinary sense, and the other as an office in the congregation. There is no difficulty however in separating them from each other.

Of widows in the ordinary sense, as being desolate and requiring consolation and assistance, Paul speaks in *1st Tim.* v. 3—8 verses inclusive. He then speaks of widows in the official sense from the ninth to fifteenth verses. And in the sixteenth verse he again speaks of them in the ordinary sense of the term.

It is easy to shew this difference. In the ninth verse he objects to any widow being registered (*i. e.* as a deaconess) under sixty years of age. It is evidently impossible he could have made such a limitation respecting desolate or necessitous widows, for christian benevolence is necessarily to be extended to all such whether young or old. Hence Paul's ensuing remarks distinctly shew, that in specifying the period of sixty years, it was to be regarded only in an official sense as a qualification for a deaconess. For after having enumerated in the tenth verse, not the necessities, but the moral qualifications of those who were to be received as widows, (deaconesses) he then adds in the eleventh verse, "but the younger widows refuse," &c. Paul's argument is evidently that they were not to be trusted as *deaconesses*, for if an advantageous match was proposed to them by a heathen, that they would marry him, and thus bring reproach upon the christian name by their lapse from an official position in the congregation.

In addition to this he also mentions the further disqualification, that the younger portion of the sex were predisposed to running about, tattling, gossiping, &c. On these various considerations Paul therefore directed that only elderly females of sixty years of age, should be received as widows, (deaconesses.) As for the younger *widows*, as the context evidently requires, and not *women* as in our translation, Paul says I will that they marry or re-marry as christian women, and live irreproachably.

That the term *widow* was often used as a synomyme for *deaconess*, a reference to *Bingham's Antiq. Christ. Church*, &c. or any other copious history of the primitive church, will fully satisfy the reader as to that fact.

The recognition of the deaconesses as officers of the church by an apostolic ordination, wholly destroys all that false analogy so largely insisted upon by certain christian ministers of the gospel, as existing between them and the several orders of the Jewish hierarchy. This doctrine gradually elaborated in the corruptions of the third century, as gradually induced the clergy to get rid of the deaconesses, which they at last accomplished by reducing them to the condition of the various subordinate official appointments that were multiplied in the church at a later time.

According to our theory on the subject of church officers, we have maintained that the elders or bishops, and the deacons, were persons selected either tacitly or directly from the body of believers from a mere sense of propriety and expediency. The deaconesses therefore were recognized in a similar point of view with

the deacons, *i. e.* the former acted among the female portion of the congregation in like manner as the deacons did among the male members, and of this fact we shall presently furnish undoubted proof.

That there were originally but two orders of church officers, *viz.* bishops or elders, and deacons, is admitted by all Protestants but the Church of England, who contend for three, by making the bishop superior to the elder. But without contesting this matter on the present occasion, they, as well as the Catholics admit, that the deacons were the lowest order of the divinely constituted ministry, and that they at first rendered all those subordinate services in the church that were afterwards performed by subdeacons, readers, acolyths, &c. Hence the Catholics and the Church of England say, that all the officers in the church subordinate to the deacons are mere expedient appointments made by church authorities as convenience dictated, and hence such persons receive no ecclesiastical ordination in the proper sense. The bishops, presbyters, and deacons, as being from divine institution, are solemnly ordained in churches by an imposition of the hands of bishops or presbyters.

But it is undeniable that during the first two or three centuries, the deaconesses were ordained publicly in churches by an imposition of the bishop's hands, as formally as was done to either presbyters or deacons: and further, the deaconesses were recognized expressly by the nineteenth canon of the Council of Nice, to be a part of the clergy. (*Bingham Antiq. Christ. Church, lib. ii. chap. 22*; see also *Du Pin, Eccles. Hist. Council of Nice, and twenty-sixth canon of first Council of Orange*, in which he quotes *St. Epiphanius, Councils of Chalcedon, can. 15*; *Epauna, can. 21*, as testifying to ordination of deaconesses.)

That the deaconesses were ordained by imposition of hands, is abundantly shewn by Bingham, as above quoted, who also states from various authorities, that their ordination was accompanied by the express ecclesiastical technicalities of *χειροτονία* and *χειροθεσία*, both signifying imposition of hands.

The Apostolical Constitutions* not only recognize the deaconesses to be clergy, but their institution is mentioned with even a blas-

* This apocryphal collection in eight books is ascribed falsely to Clement, Bishop of Rome. "It is a work of undoubted antiquity, but at the same time of uncertain date. The matter of this work is unquestionably ancient, since the manners and discipline of which it exhibits a view are those which prevailed amongst the christians of the second and third centuries, especially those resident in Greece

phemous comparison as may be seen from the following extract, (*Apostol. Constitu. lib. ii. 26,*) which is headed,

“According to what pattern and dignity *every order of the clergy* is appointed by God.

“Let the *bishop* therefore preside over you as one honored with the authority of God, &c. But let the *deacon* minister to him (the *bishop*) as Christ does to his Father, &c. Let also the *deaconess* be honored of you in the place of the *Holy Ghost*, and do not, nor say any thing without the *deacon*, &c. And as we cannot believe on Christ without the teaching of the Spirit, so let not any woman address herself to the *deacon*, or to the *bishop* without the *deaconess*. Let the *presbyters* be esteemed by you to represent us the apostles, and let them be the teachers of divine knowledge,” &c.

In further proof of the clerical character of the *deaconesses* previous to the fourth century, I shall extract from the *Apostolical Constitutions* the directions there ascribed to the apostles concerning the ordination of *presbyters*, *deacons*, and *deaconesses*, which the reader will perceive are precisely alike as to any external form or ceremony. (See *Apostol. Constit. lib. viii. chaps. 16—18.*)

ORDINATION OF A PRESBYTER.

“When thou ordainest a *presbyter*, O *bishop*, *lay thy hands upon his head in the presence of the presbyters and deacons*, and pray saying,” &c. Then follows the prayer that he may be replenished with the spirit of grace and counsel qualifying him to discharge his office.

ORDINATION OF A DEACON.

“Thou shalt ordain a *deacon*, O *bishop*, *by laying thy hands upon him in the presence of the whole presbytery and of the deacons*, and shall pray saying,” &c. Then follows the prayer that he may be replenished with the *Holy Spirit*, &c. “And grant that he may discharge acceptably the ministration of a *deacon*, steadily, unblamably, without reproof, and be accounted worthy of a higher degree, through the mediation of thine only begotten Son, with whom,” &c.

and the oriental regions.” This fact Mosheim says “has been proved, I think, beyond all controversy by that most able investigator of christian antiquities, Bishop Beveridge.”—*Mosheim Comment. on Affairs of Christ'y before Const. I.* 272.

ORDINATION OF A DEACONESS.

“Concerning a deaconess, O bishop, thou shalt *lay thy hands upon her in the presence of the presbytery and of the deacons and deaconesses*, and shalt say, O eternal God, the father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the creator of man and woman, who didst with thy spirit replenish Miriam, and Deborah, and Anna, and Huldah, who didst not disdain that thy only begotten Son should be born of a woman, who also in the tabernacle of the testimony and in the temple did ordain women to be keepers of thy holy gates, do thou thyself also now look upon this thy handmaid appointed to the office of a deaconess, and grant her the Holy Spirit, and cleanse her from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, that she may worthily discharge the work that is committed unto her, unto thy glory and the praise of thy Christ, with whom glory,” &c.

The facts of the case therefore are distinct, that for nearly three centuries the deaconesses did receive ordination in no wise different from that of the presbyters and deacons, and consequently if these last were made members of a divinely appointed clergy by such ordination, then the deaconesses must in like manner be considered members of this divine corporation of clergy.

But the doctrine having gradually prevailed among the church officers before the middle of the third century, that they were the successors of the Aaronical priesthood, whose high-priest, priest and levite were represented by bishop, presbyter and deacon; it then became necessary to get rid of the deaconess, to whose function there was nothing analogous under the Jewish priestly system. This end was obtained by gradually reducing the deaconess to the same class as the subdeacon, acolyth, reader, &c. and having once taken such a position it was then followed up by decrees of councils positively *forbidding the deaconesses to be ordained in the church by an imposition of hands*. This was done by the Council of Laodicea, A. D. 370, by the eleventh canon. First Council of Orange, A. D. 441, by the twenty-sixth canon. Second Council of Orleans, A. D. 533, by the eighteenth canon, &c. (See *Du Pin, and Bingham Antiq. Christ Church, lib. ii. chap. 22.*) Ultimately the order was entirely abolished.

If we go backward however in time before the deacons were exalted to the priestly order, we have the clearest evidence they discharged no other function among the christian brethren, than the deaconess did to the female sex. Thus in the *Apostol. Const. lib. ii.*

chap. 58, it is provided that when persons come into the churches, whether "a poor man, or one of a low family, or a stranger, whether he be young or old, *the deacon* shall find a place (a seat) for these with all his heart, instead of accepting persons before men, &c. The very same thing let *the deaconess* do for those women that come, whether they be poor or rich."

In book iii. *chap.* 15, it is said, "For which reason, O bishop, do thou ordain thy fellow workers, the laborers for life and righteousness, such *deacons* as are pleasing to God, such as thou provest to be worthy among all the people and such as shall be ready for the necessities of their ministration. Ordain also *a deaconess* who is faithful and holy *for ministrations to the women*. *For sometimes thou canst not send a deacon, who is a man, to the women in certain houses on account of the unbelievers.* *Thou shalt therefore send a woman, a deaconess*, on account of the imagination of the bad."

"*And we stand in need of a woman, a deaconess, for many occasions*, and first in the baptism of women; *the deacon* shall anoint their forehead with the holy oil, and after him *the deaconess* shall anoint them, for there is no necessity that the women should be seen (*i. e.* naked) by the men," &c.

In the next, or sixteenth chapter, the formularies for baptism are prescribed, and the bishop is directed to dip them in the water, "and let *a deacon* receive the man, and *a deaconess* the woman," &c.

In the eighth book, chapter twenty-eight, which is esteemed by critics to be of later compilation than the preceding seven books, it is said, "*A deacon doth not bless, doth not give the blessing*, but receiveth it from the bishop and presbyter. *He doth not baptize, he doth not offer*," (*i. e.* consecrate the eucharist) "but when a bishop or presbyter hath offered," (*i. e.* consecrated, &c.) "he" (the deacon) "distributeth to the people, not as a priest, *but as one that ministers to the priests*."

"*A deaconess doth not bless, nor perform any thing belonging to the office of presbyter or deacon, but is only to keep the doors*," (*i. e.* on that side of the church where the women entered, as the deacon did on the other side,) "and to minister to the presbyters in the baptizing of women on account of decency,"* &c.

From the preceding quotations it must be evident that the dea-

* The reader can fully understand the force of this remark if he remembers what we stated, Vol. II. 142, that at these times both men and women when they were baptized were stripped stark naked.

cons and deaconesses originally exercised precisely analogous functions, unless in the immaterial exception that the deacon, probably, exclusively handed the bread and wine of the sacrament among the communicants at the love feasts. In other respects their duties were the same. Indeed it could not be otherwise, for as we have shewn above, the deacon was expressly forbidden *to either bless, baptize, or consecrate the sacrament.* This absolute negation of sacerdotal functions to the deacon is also insisted upon in book viii. chap. 46, where it is said, "*It is not lawful for a deacon to offer the sacrifice,*" (i. e. consecrate the eucharist) "*or to baptize, or to give the blessing small or great.*" And to meet the objection that Philip the deacon, and Ananias, had baptized the eunuch and St. Paul, the compilers of the *Apostol. Const.* assert, that those acts had been performed only from an express commission of Christ.

Nothing therefore can be clearer than that the deacon being forbidden to exercise any priestly function, he was necessarily a mere servant or assistant to the bishop or presbyter, and consequently could do no more among the men than the deaconess could do among the women. We might go on and shew how they were both actually employed, but our object is merely to prove that in their original appointment their ordination and functions were precisely similar, and that when detached from the devices of ecclesiastical corruptions, both deacon and deaconess will be found to have been mere expedient institutions that were of greater or less utility, but that neither has any divine commission for the exercise of their functions; and this fact being established, it sufficiently proves that neither were the bishops or presbyters of any divine institution, since they cannot refer to any higher authority for their ordination than the deacons or deaconesses.

After this somewhat digressive discourse concerning deaconesses, which is however of the utmost importance as illustrating the actual position of church officers in the earlier ages of Christianity; we again resume our argument against the theory of any divinely constituted clergy, as founded upon what the apostles have either said, or omitted to say, concerning officers in christian congregations.

In 1 *Tim. chap. v. 17*, Paul writes, "let the *elders* (presbuteroi) that rule well be accounted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine." Whether this means a greater amount of respectful consideration, or whether it alludes to some compensation for the time and services rendered by such

elders, it is not important that we should determine,* the facts of themselves sufficiently shew a certain religious organization. But that it differed from that of a class or of a prayer meeting we are not justified to believe, for as the present occasion afforded the apostle the fairest opportunity to have urged upon Timothy, the necessity of making suitable provision for the *elders* as members of a divine ecclesiastical institution, so as he has not even alluded to such a system it is impossible we can suppose that Paul recognized any such organization. Furthermore in *chap. iv.* the apostle warns Timothy of a future great apostacy from Christianity, and desires him to "put the brethren in remembrance of these things as a good *minister* (*διάκονος*) of Jesus Christ." Here again was a most suitable opportunity to have taught the people to look to their divinely constituted ministry, lest they should be seduced from the true faith; nevertheless he does not say a word on the subject, which silence I presume fully justifies the belief that no clerical body existed at that time in the ordinary sense of the term.

I shall for the present pass over the consideration of the argument that the advocates of diocesan episcopacy have endeavored to deduce from this epistle in favor of their doctrine, for as their reasoning alike includes the 2d Epistle to Timothy, and that to Titus, we apprehend our simplest course will be to estimate the subject after having shown the scope and bearing of the three epistles.

The Epistle to Titus was written in the same year as the one first addressed to Timothy, which is supposed to have been about A. D. 64, and is the same in substance. Paul left Titus in the Island of Crete "that thou should set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain *elders* (*presbuteroi*) in every city as I had appointed thee." He then gives him various directions as to the

* My opinion however is, that the apostle's observation applies to those devout persons who preached the gospel in adjacent villages, or as we should call them missionaries, and who consequently as long as thus employed could not also labor for their subsistence. Such persons therefore were to be lodged in the houses of the brotherhood wherever they came, and to be gratuitously furnished with food and whatever necessaries they might require. This, however, was only to be done while they continued to act as missionaries, for if they married and had families they must work to support them, or as it is now said of the Methodist preachers when they withdraw from the itinerancy, "*they locate*" i. e. the church no longer provides for them and they occupy themselves in some secular calling.

The whole matter I think may be fairly estimated by what Christ said to the apostles when he sent them to preach the gospel, (*Math. x. 9—11*) as also the seventy disciples, (*Luke, x. 7, 8.*)

moral qualifications of such persons in which the terms *elders* (presbuteroi) and *bishops* (episcopoi) are evidently synonymous.

That the apostle considered the selection of *zokonem*, elders, or bishops, to be a matter of great importance at that time is very evident from his observation to Titus, (*chap. i. 10, 11,*) “for there are many *unruly* and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision, (*i. e.* judaizing christians,) *whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.*” Now if Paul had recognized a divinely constituted ministry of ecclesiastics at this time, here was a most suitable opportunity for him to have insisted upon the divine commission of the persons to be ordained by Titus as elders or bishops, not only that they might claim authority for their general preaching, but especially so that they might put a stop to those *unruly and vain teachers*, who were propagating false doctrines in the midst of a christian population. But as the apostle does not say a word that implies any such divine clerical system, when so evident a propriety existed for its enunciation, I apprehend nothing can be more fairly inferred than that it could not have had any existence. And again on the other hand, as the apostle's instructions apply perfectly well as directing suitable persons to be selected as the leaders of a class or prayer meeting, so neither do any of the above objections apply to them which are so evidently hostile to the clerical hypothesis.

After having introduced the subject of the appointment of *elders*, and specified what ought to be their moral and intellectual qualifications, Paul in his Epistle to Titus, as is not unusual with him, digresses by making some severe reflections upon the character of the Cretans, and admonishes Titus how to deal with them. In the second chapter, he again resumes the subject of the ordination of church officers, and directs that the *elders*, ($\pi\varrho\sigma\beta\upsilon\tau\alpha\varsigma$) improperly rendered *aged men* in our English Bibles, should be “sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.” The *aged women*, “($\pi\varrho\sigma\beta\upsilon\tau\iota\delta\alpha\varsigma$) *i. e.* the deaconesses or *widows*, (see our observations, page 209,) should likewise in behaviour, be as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, *teachers of good things. That they may teach,*” ($\sigma\omega\varphi\sigma\eta\iota\zeta\omega\varsigma$ *i. e.* properly instruct in sobriety, discretion, &c.) “the young women to love their husbands,” &c.

That these *elderly persons* of whom Paul speaks, whether male or female were not mere aged individuals of the congregation, but those official persons whom we have technically denominated as

elders, deaconesses, &c. is sufficiently clear in the circumstance that the exhortation to them involves the very qualifications required by 1 *Tim.* iii. 2—8 in the selection of elders, deacons, and deaconesses, as we have shewn at page 208. Furthermore the object of the exhortation to the *elderly women*, in *Titus* ii. 3 and 4, is expressly stated to be, to the end of their being *teachers or instructors of the younger women*, as to the decorum and proprieties of a christian life. It is plain therefore that the *elderly women* as mentioned in the epistle to Titus, were the same class of persons who in other places are spoken of as deaconesses, widows, &c. and whom we have already shewn exercised a function among the women similar to that rendered by the deacons towards the male members of the congregation.

As might be expected, neither the advocates of Episcopacy or of the Presbyterian form of church government are generally willing to admit that these *aged women*, (presbutidas) mentioned in *Titus*, held an ecclesiastical position in the churches. The construction of the Greek phraseology and the plain inferences from it however are so strong, that many individual divines and theologians acknowledge they have doubts as to the correctness of the ordinary interpretation put upon the words in question. Others however have distinctly recognized that these *aged women* did hold an official position in the primitive christian congregations, and when we consider how strongly the prejudices of the clergy are opposed to such a recognition, we perceive there must be great force in the evidence in favor of our construction, when clergymen are impartial enough to admit such an exposition.*

It was probably to these female officers, or deaconesses, that Paul alludes to in various places in his epistles, where he censures them for having attempted to publicly exhort or preach in the congregation. But that they were authorized to instruct other persons, and especially their own sex in private houses or in the familiarity of the domestic circle, is evident from the honorable mention of such women in various places of the New Testament. Thus Apollos (*Acts* xvi. 26) was instructed by Aquila and his wife

* Macknight on the epistles is very distinct as to this point. Bloomfield, (*Recen. Synop.*) after noticing Macknight's opinion, says, that Hammond, and Le Clerc, had the same views. Bloomfield himself, though he thinks the apostle spoke of women generally, yet adds that "he also had in mind those who filled ecclesiastical offices,"—in other words the deaconesses.

Pyle, in his paraphrase of the words in question, says, "elderly women, particularly such as are employed by the church," to this he adds a note stating they were *deaconesses*; as he had observed in like manner in a note on 1 *Tim.* iii. 11.

Priscilla. Paul also enumerates certain women, (*Romans* xvi. 12) who had labored in extending the knowledge of christian truth. The four daughters of Philip the evangelist mentioned *Acts* xxi. 9, "which did prophesy," were probably of this class of women, *i. e.* they exhorted or instructed their own sex, or indeed any other persons with whom they came into contact in their family intercourse.

The second Epistle to Timothy, which is also the last of Paul's Epistles, was written A. D. 65, or thirty-two years after the ascension. The apostle after a most affectionate reminiscence and exhortation directs him thus: "The things that thou hast heard of me," (chap. ii. 2) "the same commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also." Here then is a system of teaching directly inculcated, but not a word is said as to the fact that the persons to whom this ministry of teaching was committed were a body of divinely constituted men, which it is utterly incredible the apostle should have overlooked, if we suppose a corporation of ecclesiastics were in effective operation at this time. This silence is still more emphatic in its bearing when we consider that Paul in the two concluding chapters of this Epistle, in the most impressive manner warns Timothy of the perilous times that were about to ensue. (*Tim.* iv. 3, 4.) For the time will come when they (*i. e.* christians) will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts (rather misjudgments, whims and fancies) shall they heap *to themselves teachers* having itching ears, (*i. e.* seeking after novelties;) and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." In view therefore of these predicted corruptions and apostacy from the truth, let any honest man scrutinize the third and fourth chapters of this Epistle, and then let him ask himself whether it be not utterly incredible that Paul could have forborne to have impressed on the mind of Timothy the necessity of urging on the people the importance of adhering to a divinely constituted body of clergy, if any such institution had either existed at that time, or was ever contemplated would exist.

I have in a previous page remarked, that the advocates of diocesan episcopacy have found in the Epistles of Paul to Timothy and Titus their greatest arguments in favor of that doctrine. From the circumstance that Timothy and Titus were directed by Paul *to ordain elders and deacons* in certain districts where christian churches had been already established, it has been most gratuitously inferred, that if the elders or presbyters of churches in those districts had a legal right to ordain other elders or presbyters, that

it would have been altogether superfluous to have given such a commission to Timothy or Titus; and hence it is insisted that they were superior to presbyters, *i. e.* that they were bishops, and as such had a right to do what it would have been unlawful for presbyters to have done.

But the value of this argument depends altogether upon the truth of the assumption that either Christ or the apostles had previously instituted a divinely organized clergy, who as an ecclesiastical corporation were to exercise those peculiar functions that our ministers of the gospel arrogate to themselves. But the truth of this hypothesis we have contested throughout every page of this investigation, and I apprehend at every step we have hitherto shewn that such an opinion is wholly destitute of Scripture warranty. The apostles themselves were not a corporation (see page 162, &c.) neither is there any statement made in the New Testament, either direct or indirect, that justifies the inference that they recognized any ecclesiastical organization whatsoever, as being of divine appointment. We therefore assert that Timothy or Titus were not sent by Paul to ordain elders in the ecclesiastical sense; but as being individuals upon whose piety and discretion he could rely, they were to *select or appoint** as far as might be necessary, any leaders or directors, male or female, in the different congregations of believers heretofore established by Paul. These had however no more ecclesiastical commission conferred on them by the ordination, than is given by a Methodist preacher to a class-leader, and which indeed I believe was literally what the apostle contemplated, with the exception, that he appointed several leaders, and the Methodist preacher appoints but one. As we have already given at page 184, &c. the theory of a class, it is not necessary to urge the parallelism any further on the present occasion.

I think nothing can be more purely gratuitous than the supposition that Timothy and Titus were located as diocesan bishops at

* The word *καθιστημι*, translated *ordain*, in *Titus* i. 5, bears no such technical sense as there given to the word. It signifies to make, or appoint, without implying how made. The word occurs in twenty-two places of the New Testament, and is rendered by our translators for the most part correctly by *make*, I will *make* thee ruler over many things, *Math.* xxv. 21, 23. Who *made* me a judge or divider, &c. *Luke* xii. 14. But the ecclesiastical prejudices of the translators of the English Bible prevailed in translating *Titus* i. 5; *Heb.* v. 1; viii. 3; for they have expressed the word in those verses by the technical phrase *to ordain*. With this explanation, I apprehend the English reader will perceive that there is no more authority in *Titus* i. 5, in favor of the ecclesiastical assumption, than there is in our simple rendering of the words by the terms *make*, *constitute*, or *appoint*.

Ephesus and Crete; for their true position whether as regards the apostle Paul or the christian congregations to whom they were sent by him, are perfectly discernable from various portions of his different Epistles. Paul retained about his person several of his disciples in whom he reposed the greatest confidence, and who he either employed under his immediate direction, or sent on particular emergencies to places which he could not conveniently visit. The personal supervision of the congregations or churches established by him had gradually become onerous, as is evident from *2 Cor.* xi. 28, where in enumerating his troubles, he mentions "that which cometh upon me daily, the care (*i. e.* supervision) of all the churches," and hence he found the convenience of engaging other persons as his assistants. To this end he employed Timothy, Sos-thenes, Crescens, Titus, and others, as is evident from various passages in his Epistles. He sent Timothy therefore to Ephesus just as he had previously sent him and Erastus to Macedonia, (*Acts xix.* 22) to the Thessalonians, (*1 Thes.* iii. 2) and to the Philip-pians, not as a bishop, but as he himself said, (*Philip.* ii. 19, 22,) "For I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your state, &c. But *ye know the proof of him*, that *as a son with a father*, (not as a bishop) he hath served with me in the gospel."

Furthermore, that Timothy was not regarded by the apostle as being a diocesan bishop at Ephesus, may be reasonably inferred from the very last words of Paul's exhortation to him. (*2 Tim.* iv. 5.) "Watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, *do the work of an evangelist*," *i. e.* of a mere preacher of the gospel. Why did not Paul say, "*do the work of a bishop*," if he had sent Timothy to Ephesus to exercise episcopal functions? It is further manifest that Paul required Timothy to return to him after having accomplished the object for which he was desired to remain at Ephesus, and therefore he urges him twice to that effect in *2 Tim.* iv. 9, 21, "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me. Do thy diligence to come before winter." The reason of which is evident, for he had then sent off his other assistants on various services as he remarks, chap. iv. 10, &c. "Demas has forsaken me and is departed into Thessa-lonica, Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia: only Luke is with me; bring Mark with thee for he is profitable unto me, &c. and *Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus*." From this latter phrase I should infer Timothy was not then stationed *at Ephesus*, but if any one chooses to insist upon it, then I shall as peremptorily insist that the sending of Tychicus to Ephesus was to relieve Timothy in his min-

istration at that city, in order that he might return to Paul to be employed under the immediate direction of the apostle.

In like manner Titus was recalled from Crete, (*Titus* iii. 12,) “When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me at Nicopolis, for I have determined there to winter.”

From these statements it is evident how consistent our views are as to the nature of the service performed by Timothy at Ephesus, which are further sustained by the inconsistency of requesting a bishop to leave his diocese, without any reason being assigned for such a request, and make a long journey from Ephesus to Rome which in those days required weeks to accomplish. I should therefore presume, prejudice being set aside, there can be no difficulty in determining whether our opinion, or that of the advocates of diocesan episcopacy, be the most consistent with the statements made in the New Testament.

I have taken no notice of the phrase “lay hands suddenly on no man,” because I apprehend the reader to be sufficiently aware that this rite only implies designation to any function or service, and as such had been used in the ordination of synagogue officers among the Jews for centuries, see Vol. I. 501, &c.

Though I do not consider the Epistle to the Hebrews to have been written or dictated by Paul, as I have already stated, Vol. I. 254, yet as I regard it to have been composed by some one fully instructed in the apostolic doctrine, a little after the middle of the first century, I shall not hesitate in compliance with such belief to introduce it on the present occasion, so far as it bears on the subject of the ecclesiastical constitution of the primitive church.

The Epistle to the Hebrews in this particular is chiefly important in its silence. For as the scope of its argument is to establish the fact that the Jewish Dispensation was a mere shadow or type of what had been fulfilled by Jesus Christ, so if there had been any ecclesiastical organization appointed to succeed it, it is inconceivable the author should have foreborne to proclaim and vindicate the new system; whereas he says not a word that can possibly imply any ecclesiastical constitution of things. Furthermore, he teaches that Jesus Christ was our appointed high priest and mediator before Jehovah, so that every individual might himself come boldly into the divine presence through the stated mediation of Christ. (*Heb.* iv. 14—16.) The conclusion therefore is direct, that no human ecclesiastical organization was considered to be any longer necessary.

The author of this Epistle, in the concluding chapter, among other matters exhorts his readers (*chap. xiii. 7, 17*) to remember or to obey their religious leaders or instructors, most erroneously paraphrased in our Bibles as "*those which have the rule over you.*" The Greek words are *των ηγουμενων υμων*, which are simply *your guides, leaders, or directors, i. e. those persons who are your religious instructors*, without implying any ecclesiastical authority to them as such. The exhortation to remember and obey such persons is perfectly consistent with what we have already stated throughout this investigation. There were certain intellectual, pious, and zealous individuals in all christian congregations, who in like manner as the uninspired prophets of the Jewish Dispensation, (see Vol. I. 205,) devoted themselves to teaching their fellow men, and as such were recognized as heads, leaders, &c. in their several religious communities, though without the least pretension of being from divine appointment. There is nothing whatever in the Epistle to the Hebrews that can authorize any one to assert the persons mentioned above (*chap. xiii. 7, 17*) were clergymen, but taken in connection with our argument concerning the scope of this Epistle, we have every reason to consider them in the same light as the leaders of a prayer or class meeting are regarded at the present time.

The Epistle of James, which is ordinarily supposed to have been written A. D. 61, furnishes us with direct evidence of the constitution of christian churches on the prayer meeting form. The third chapter is clear on this matter; it commences with an address to the people at large, of which the meaning is plainly this: "my brethren be not many masters," (*διδασκαλοι, teachers,*) *i. e.* in our idiom, repress that eagerness to set yourselves up as *teachers* which is so rife among you, for in so doing you assume a personal responsibility, which exposes you to greater condemnation than if you remained in the less conspicuous position of hearers. Or, in other words, "though every man is liable to condemnation for errors and misjudgments concerning his religious conduct before God, yet he is liable to a greater condemnation who in undertaking to instruct others, necessarily incurs the danger that he may perhaps lead them astray through his infirmity or presumption. Hence the office of *teacher* is not one to be lightly undertaken, for in many different ways all men are liable to err, and as far as their influence extends, as liable to mislead others."

James then enlarges upon the mischief that originates from asperity of language, which he evidently bases upon the frequency

of controversies and personal rivalries among those persons who had undertaken to exhort the members of their several congregations, and after some strong language to them on the subject, he enforces the necessity of humility, forbearance, and charity, on the following considerations: (*verse 13, &c.*)

If any of you claim to be a wise man, and endued with that knowledge that qualifies him to set up for an instructor of others, let him shew his qualification in those particulars by the uprightness of his conduct, and the meekness of a truly wise man, who as conscious of human infirmity avoids every thing that looks like arrogance towards those who differ from him. But if your wisdom and knowledge is only manifested by bitterness, envy, and strife, glory not in the wisdom that leads to such results, and lie not against the truth; *i. e.* do not pervert the essential principles of Christianity by such utterly improper conduct, for such wisdom cometh not from God, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. Where there is envying and strife among men, there also will be found confusion, and every evil work which is manifestly contrary to God.

That this censure and exhortation is addressed exclusively to those who assumed to be teachers or instructors of congregations, I apprehend to be indubitable, for no other construction can be put upon James' words which will not render them unmeaning.

That they cannot be addressed to a divinely appointed clergy is equally evident, for not the smallest allusion to such an organization can be discerned. If James had recognized any divinely appointed ministers of the gospel as an ecclesiastical body, his censure would have been directed to them as being commissioned ministers of Christ, who instead of instructing the people in meekness, righteousness, and holiness, were setting them the most pernicious example of every thing contrary to the principles of Christianity.*

* As it is perfectly conclusive in my opinion that these wrong-headed and quarrelsome teachers were mere laymen, I will apply that fact as constituting the basis of an investigation concerning the text in *chap. v. 14*, "let him call for the *elders of the church*, and let them pray over him, *anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord*," &c.

As the *elders* here mentioned, according to my previous exposition, could have been no other than the lay teachers as above censured by James, they could not have imparted any sacramental grace by such anointing. Neither could it be supposed that they regarded an anointing with oil to have been a specific in all cases of disease. As it now reads, it evidently implies that it was either of sacramental efficacy, or a *panacea* in all kinds of sickness. As being contrary therefore to the scheme of Christianity, which recognizes no reception of grace but by prayer, or as being contrary to all medical experience as a mere remedy, I can come to no

The next apostolic epistle in chronological order, is that of *1 Peter*, which was written about A. D. 64, or about thirty-one years after Christ's ascension; when we must suppose every particular pertaining to the establishment of christian society was at least perfectly comprehended by the apostles, if not by every believer.

Peter in this Catholic epistle, *i. e.* one which was addressed to the whole christian world, after many affectionate observations concerning their religious calling, directs them every where (*chap. ii. 13—16*) to submit to the government of the heathen kings and magistrates under whom they might be providentially placed. He then (*chap. ii. 18, &c. iii. 1, &c.*) requires servants to be obedient to their masters, wives to be in subjection to their husbands, husbands to be affectionate to their wives, and all other persons to be courteous and affectionate to each other as brethren. But he does not say a word about being obedient to *the church*, which if there had been any such divine institution he could not possibly have omitted to have inculcated. This inference becomes still more impressive in the fact, that in *chap. v. 1, &c.* he directly addresses himself to that class of persons whom he terms *elders*, (presbuteroi.) These he exhorts, not as an apostle but as being himself an *elder*, “to feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof;” (*επιτροπούτες*, *i. e.* episcopizing or superintending them) “not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind. Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock, &c. Likewise ye younger, submit yourselves unto the *elder*, (presbuterois.) Yea all of you be subject (*i. e.* defer) to one another, and be clothed with humility, for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.”

On these passages I remark, there is not a word said that implies these *elders* stood upon any divine or apostolic institution, which it is impossible we can suppose the apostle would have omitted to state, had he recognized any such corporation, seeing that this epistle was directed to the edification of the general body of

other conclusion but that the words “anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord,” are a downright interpolation. I am the more confirmed in this opinion by finding that the Catholic Du Pin, in his *Abridg. Discip. third Cent.* says, there is no mention in the first three ages of the church of any anointing of the sick.

By parity of reasoning, the words in *Mark vi. 13*, “*and anointed with oil*,” &c. are a manifest interpolation, as being inconsistent with the exercise of that miraculous power bestowed on the apostles by Christ; for the use of any external application in such cases would detract from the miracle.

christians wherever they might be found, and in which the apostle specially insists upon obedience to heathen magistrates, and minutely states the relative duties of husbands, wives, and servants.

At the same time that this silence of the apostle as to any divine organization of church officers is wholly inconsistent with the supposition that such a body existed, every observation made by him accords perfectly with that simple condition of things that is to be found in a prayer or class meeting, in which every one having any spiritual gift is exhorted to exercise it to the common edification. Thus he says (*chap. iv. 10, 11*) "*As every man hath received the gift*, even so minister the same to one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. *If any man speak*, let him speak as (*i. e.* according to) the oracles of God; *If any man minister*, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth," &c.

And again in Peter's second epistle, which was written about a year after, or A. D. 65, and which is also a Catholic epistle, or one addressed to the whole body of professing christians, published in the very anticipation of his removal by death, (*chap. i. 14, 15*.) and with the express intention of leaving the christian world instructions that should be useful to them for the future; yet notwithstanding all these considerations, he says not a single word about any form of church constitution, or ecclesiastical organization of the ministry. This very remarkable omission had there been any such church institution, is more eminently wonderful in the fact, that he at the same time forewarns them (*chap. ii. 1, &c.*) "there shall be false teachers among you, who privily" (*i. e.* imperceptibly) "shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction: And many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth (*i. e.* christianity) shall be evil spoken of," &c.

Is it not utterly incredible on such an occasion as this, under the anticipation of events so injurious to christian truth, that the apostle Peter should not have referred the christian world, thus exposed to the most fearful consequences, to the guidance of a consecrated clergy if any such organization had been recognized by him as being of the institution of Christ. Whatever other persons may think on this subject, to me nothing seems more clear than that the apostle has here given the most forcible testimony against the hypothesis of any ecclesiastical organization having ever been instituted either by Christ or the apostles.

The next epistle in order of time is that of Jude, which is supposed to have been written about A. D. 64 or 65.

Jude states expressly, (*verse 3,*) "it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith which was once (*i. e.* heretofore) delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, (*i. e.* into the body of professing christians,) turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."

Here then was an absolute necessity that Jude should distinctly urge upon his readers the all important office of those divinely appointed ministers of the gospel who are supposed to have derived a spiritual commission from the apostles to instruct mankind. But not one word does Jude say upon the subject, but earnestly entreats his readers to be on their guard lest they be led astray by the prevailing errors of the time.

The first epistle of John, which is supposed to have been written about A. D. 68 or 69, *i. e.* thirty-five years after Christ had ascended to heaven, is addressed most affectionately to all christians. He informs them (*chap. ii. 18, 19*) "even now there are many anti-christs," *i. e.* those who had gone out from that faithful community to which he belonged, and of whose false doctrines he gives them an outline, assigning as a reason, (*verse 26,*) "these things have I written unto you *concerning them that seduce you.*" But though the emergency was so great, yet not a word does he say concerning any divinely appointed ecclesiastical organization which might be supposed to afford the suitable antidote to the false teaching of the time. The apostle's exhortation to his readers would be perfectly applicable to a people living under the form of a prayer meeting, or the simplicity of a Quaker congregation. But in view of the dangerous heresies and doctrines of which he speaks, and of the actual attempts of anti-christian teachers *to seduce them* from the true faith, it becomes inconceivably wonderful he should not have referred them to a divinely organized clerical body, if any such corporation had been instituted by Christ. This consideration is further urged upon us by what he says, (*chap. iv. 1, &c.*) "believe not every spirit," (*i. e.* persons preaching on religious subjects) "but try" (*i. e. test*) "the spirits whether they are of God, because *many false prophets are gone out into the world.*" Why did he not here direct his readers to their divinely appointed clergy, in order to determine what was false teaching or false doctrine, if he recognized the existence of any such ecclesiastical body.

The last book of the New Testament canon, supposed to have been composed about A. D. 96 or 97, is of great importance in our present investigation, for mysterious as it may seem respecting the

interpretation of its symbolical exhibitions, yet there is no obscurity whatever involved in any matter concerning the christian church; for no such corporation is recognized any where throughout the whole book; a plain proof we should think that neither the apostle, nor the Spirit of God that indited the book, acknowledged any such ecclesiastical organization.

After certain preliminary exhibitions of divine power, the apostle is directed to address seven individual churches in Asia Minor, and to reprove or admonish them of certain improprieties in their religious life or faith. But though the address of the spirit is undoubtedly to the congregations of believers at these different cities, yet they are formally made to certain official individuals who are respectively designated as the “Angel of the church in Ephesus, the Angel of the church in Smyrna,” &c. This term “Angel of the church,” is the literal translation of the old synagogue term “*scheliac tsibbor*,” of which we have spoken Vol. I. 509, and to which we refer our readers in case they may have forgotten the term.

It would be a most unaccountable proceeding on the part of the apostle John, if he recognized at this time any divine ecclesiastical constitution of the christian church, that he should not take some notice of it when remonstrating with seven different churches concerning improprieties in their life and doctrine. And as if to shew the absurdity of after theories on the subject, he does not even use the ordinary term *elder*, whether as *presbiteros* or *episcopos*, in addressing the principal persons of these seven congregations, but the subordinate term “*scheliac tsibbor*,” a function which any approved person in the synagogue could discharge, and which required no special appointment whatever.

Now let us reflect a little on this matter; the first christian disciples were Jews, and the influence of all Jewish opinions, practices, and institutions, was largely felt at this time in all assemblies of the primitive believers in Jesus Christ. Consequently, whenever the term “*angel of the church*” was pronounced, it must have forcibly reminded them of that office of *scheliac tsibbor* to which they had been accustomed under synagogue institutions, and the suggestion must have been direct, that the highest officer in each of the seven churches of Asia Minor, had no other commission for the function he exercised, than the *scheliac tsibbor* had for his appointment in the synagogue. If the apostle intended it otherwise, why did he employ the well known synagogue term? If any one undertakes to conjecture that the apostle uses the word in a different sense from the synagogue term, I trust he will not require me to prove the

negative to a supposition so purely gratuitous. Let him shew where the Scripture justifies such an assumption, and not until that is shown, ought any one to regard this term "Angel of the Church," but as a direct argument against the supposition of any divine organization of the ministers of the christian church, for we must remember John wrote the Apocalypse near seventy years after Jesus Christ had ascended to heaven.

The remaining chapters of this symbolical revelation of future things belonging to the moral history of mankind, future to the days of the apostle, and terminating in views of the final judgment and the ultimately blissful condition of the redeemed in Jesus Christ, as we have said before, does not offer us any symbol or personification of the christian church. The believers in Jesus Christ, or the true worshippers of Jehovah, are indeed frequently mentioned, but only as *individuals* who should be grievously oppressed and persecuted by those wicked anti-christian powers that should obtain a future domination on the earth, and which should continue until Christ having overthrown them, should then establish his ultimate sovereignty over mankind. But why is there no mention made, or symbolic exhibition given in the Apocalypse of that divinely organized church or ecclesiastical corporation, which so many divines and theologians have contended was established by Christ, *against whom the power of hell should not prevail*. Is it not utterly unaccountable that a divine corporation of ecclesiastics should be supposed to have a perpetual existence throughout the whole Christian Dispensation, and yet in that book, where the future conditions of mankind throughout that period have been announced to us by the Spirit of God, that this most important corporation, the most intensely interesting subject that could be supposed to exist in the view of the christian world, should be wholly unnoticed, unmentioned, undesignated, that not one word should be spoken of it, not one allusion to it should be introduced.

But though the Spirit of God no where throughout the Apocalypse recognizes any ecclesiastical corporation of true christians, it most distinctly exhibits to us the rise and establishment of an *ecclesiastico-political corporation*, (*Rev. xiii. and xvii.*) to whom it was given "to make war with the saints, (*i. e.* the true followers of Jesus Christ,) and to overcome them, and power was given him over all kindred and tongues and nations," for the mystic period of *forty-two months, or twelve hundred and sixty days*, which we cannot doubt signify so many years, a day for a year. (*Ezek. iv. 6.*) That this mystical representation designates the spiritual power of

the Church of Rome as directing the temporal authority of European monarchies, no Protestant can doubt. This unholy combination of spiritual and temporal powers, however, was expressly constructed upon the theory that Christ and his apostles did establish A DIVINE CORPORATION OF ECCLESIASTICS; the fruits of which every reader of ecclesiastical history can appreciate in the records of the last thousand years; and yet from this anti-christian source, do many Protestants derive the ordination whereby the ministers of the gospel are regarded at this time to be a divinely constituted body of men. How distinctly did the Spirit of Jehovah predict this infatuation, by the representation (*Rev. xvii. 2*) "that the inhabitants of the earth have been *made drunk* with the wine of her fornication."*

I have now made a full exposition of all those passages in the New Testament, that have any important bearing on the issue between those persons who maintain that Christ or the apostles instituted a divine ecclesiastical organization of clergy, and the opinion advocated in these pages that they instituted nothing of the kind, but left every thing pertaining to the externals of Christianity to be regulated by a sense of religious propriety or expediency,

* The Church of England alone among Protestants seems to have fully appreciated the consequences resulting from such foundation for ecclesiastical ordinations, and hence the high-churchmen have very generally denied that the Church of Rome is that anti-christian power designated in the book of Revelations. Their reasoning is very ingenuous as to this matter. In the British Critic for October, 1840, a writer there expresses himself as follows: "We consider that it is impossible to maintain certain branches of the church to be the communion of anti-christ," (*i. e.* the Catholics) "as it has been the fashion with Protestants to do, *without our own branch being involved in the charge*. We are much disposed to question, whether any tests can be given to prove that the Roman communion is the synagogue of Satan, which will not *in the judgment of many involve the Church of England*. This is a most serious consideration in proportion as we incline to concur in it. In such case it will be from no special leaning towards Romanism *that we become eager to prove that Rome is not the seat of the Enemy of God*; it will arise simply from *prudential motives* if we have no other. It is very well for Sandemanian, Ranter, or Quaker, to call Rome the seat of anti-christ. We" (*i. e.* the Church of England) "cannot afford to do so, *nostra res agitur, we come next*. Members of our church (Church of England) should be entreated to consider this carefully," (*i. e.* not whether it is *true in fact*, but as regards the consequence.) "In thus assaulting Rome they are using an argument which is as certainly if not fully available *against their present religious system*, (*i. e.* of the Church of England,) and one which if *they use it consistently*, must drive them forward into some more simple system of religion," &c.

It may not be amiss to remark that this denial of the Church of Rome to be the anti-christ, is not a recent inference of members of the Church of England. It commenced in the reign of King James I. as the reader may see who will consult Bishop Warburton's powerful exposition on the subject, in his sermon on the Rise of Anti-christ.

based upon the natural condition of christian society, in which it was anticipated that devout persons of sufficient moral and intellectual ability would be always found ready, under a sense of their moral responsibilities before God, to exercise their several gifts to the instruction and edification of the brotherhood, as well as extend the blessings of Christ's spiritual kingdom to those who lived in the darkness of heathen superstitions.

To the preceding analysis of the particular texts of the New Testament bearing on our controversy with the advocates of a divinely appointed christian ministry, we will now subjoin a few observations on the general subject, which we could not take notice of previously.

In confirmation of our theory that the officers or ministers of christian churches in the times of the apostles were nothing more than laymen, who exercised themselves as is done in a class or lay prayer meeting, we call the reader's attention to the circumstance, that the New Testament writers have never spoken of the ministers of the gospel by any technicality of terms as applied to individual officers, nor by any generic appellation which comprehends them as a body. Thus the more eminent leaders or instructors of the several congregations are termed indifferently, elders, (*presbuteroi*) bishops or supervisors, (*episcopoi*) elderly or aged men, (*presbutas*.) Those persons who acted in more subordinate positions were called, if males, deacons and younger men,* if females, they were mentioned as deaconesses, widows, elderly or aged women, (*presbutidas*) thus shewing by this loose mode of speaking, that there was nothing technical or consecrated in their office or function, and that any convenient word sufficiently designated their position. If the apostles had ever contemplated the organization of the church as a corporation of ministers consecrated to God, and acting under a divine commission, which was to qualify them as such throughout all generations of men until the ending of the world, they would most assuredly have selected a suitable terminology, which they would have defined, and to which they would have strictly adhered in their writings, as being essentially necessary to give consistency to the system of things they might desire to establish. On the contrary, however, we find they used the most common terms without any definitions of them, and by the further use of several synonymes equally general in their applica-

* That *younger men* is often synonymous with deacons, see note to *Mosheim, Eccles. Hist. Cent. I. part ii. chap. 10.*

tion, they thus give us the plainest evidence that they never contemplated any formal or technical organization of the ministers or teachers of the christian church.

Moreover, there is no generic word in the New Testament which comprehends those different persons who had an official position in christian congregations. The omission of a generic term in this case is wholly inexplicable if there existed any divinely constituted body of ecclesiastics. But if the officers or leaders of congregations were mere laymen, as we have contended, there is no objection in the circumstance that the christian world did not recognize them in their official position under some generic technicality.

In process of time however, in consequence of such persons being more exclusively engaged in religious services, and when their positions became more permanently conspicuous in their several congregational associations, it gradually became convenient to adopt a term that distinguished such persons from those who never performed any official services in the congregation. The term that ultimately prevailed in a generic sense on this matter, was the Greek word *xληγος* (*cleros*) from which our term *clergy* has been derived.*

The term *clergy* however, was originally of very different signification from what it now purports to be. It then comprehended not only bishops, presbyters and deacons, to whom it has been restricted for the last thousand years, but it *included every individual, male and female, who had any official position in the church down to the door-keepers and grave-diggers.*

This circumstance that the term *clergy* was applied to every person without distinction, who held any official position in the church in the first three or four centuries, has grievously perplexed the advocates of the doctrine of a divinely commissioned ministry. They have therefore attempted to exhibit the matter in such a light as would imply that the application of the term *clergy* to persons in the church subordinate to the deacon, was an innovation on the term as used in the apostolic age, when they insist it was exclusively restricted to bishops, presbyters and deacons.

* At what time the word *clergy* was introduced into church usage is perhaps impossible to ascertain. Bingham, who contends it had been always recognized, gives Clem. Alex. who flourished about A. D. 192, as his earliest authority, though I do not think Clement's words as quoted by him are clear as to the fact. That the word is no where used in the New Testament as an ecclesiastical technical is undoubtedly, and my argument is constructed upon that circumstance alone.

Such observations however, which are calculated to lead most persons away from a correct estimate of the subject, are entirely fallacious, and only so far true as that the term *clergy* necessarily could not be applied to persons subordinate to the deacons, until such persons had been appointed. Their functions however were only subdivisions of the original duties of the deacons. If the deacon was therefore originally a clergyman, those who performed his duties were *ex officio* also clergymen.

To assert therefore as Bingham has done, (*Antiq. Christ. Church lib. i. chap. 5.*) that the term *clergy* was originally restricted to bishops, presbyters, and deacons, is not only a *suppressio veri*, but a *suggestio falsi*, for originally the deacons performed all those services, that were afterwards assigned to the sub-deacons, readers, singers, porters, &c. Thus for instance, the appointment of door-keeper, one of the lowest in the church, was originally a duty of the deacons, and deaconesses, as we have shewn at page 214, &c. who also like our sextons found seats for all strangers coming into the congregation. It was therefore perfectly natural that when persons performed the duties of clergymen, that they should be termed *clergy*, and *as such* councils and ecclesiastical writers for three or four centuries recognized all persons who held any official position or employment in the congregation. The growing importance of the ecclesiastical theory of a christian priesthood, alone induced those repeals or innovations that gradually enabled the higher ministers of the gospel to put themselves as *a clergy* in a point of comparison with the *priesthood* of the Jewish Dispensation.

I have said nothing more on this term *clergy* than is necessary to the present purpose, I shall however investigate the subject more particularly in the ensuing chapter.

In concluding the series of objections made against the hypothesis that Christ or the apostles commissioned a divinely constituted clergy, I beg leave to again call the attention of the reader to the important objection made to this assumption as stated at the beginning of this chapter, *viz.* that it is utterly incredible that Christ could have instituted a body of men or clergy to teach the laity under the authority of a divine commission, unless he also conferred infallibility on them individually. Such a qualification is not only absolutely essential to the theory of a divinely constituted ministry, but any modification of the subject is absurd. If a clergy having a divine commission and authority to teach, are at the same time fallible and liable to error in their individual capacities, the very

concession of a divine commission to them, could only lead to the propagation of error, and to the corruption of every doctrine they were to teach mankind, and thus lead them to destruction under the very sanction of God himself.

The following observations of Bishop Warburton, (*Serm. on Church Authority,*) are so pertinent as to this application, that I commend them to the attention of the reader.

"A jurisdiction in matters of faith, is what no human authority is capable of administering, as all human authority is subject to error and mistake. This is so obvious an objection, that the bishop of Rome who first set up this claim, or at the least digested it into a system, soon saw the necessity of supporting it on a pretended *infallibility*. And though this was adding blasphemy to usurpation, yet it made the **MYSTERY OF UNGODLINESS** consistent, and free at least, *from the absurdity of those (i. e. the Protestants) who confess themselves fallible*, and yet exact the same submission to their authority as if they could not err. Which of them is most absurd is easily understood, but which of them is the most presuming is hard to say; for if one intrenches upon heaven, the other ventures to insult common sense."

Before I terminate this chapter, I must caution my readers against being perplexed by an ecclesiastical fallacy that will be made use of against the views I have advocated respecting the constitution of the church as established by Christ or his apostles. This fallacy consists in the assertion, that as the christians of the fourth and fifth centuries recognized an ecclesiastical constitution of the church widely different from the one that I have urged to have been of apostolical institution, that I am bound to shew how the christian church became so grossly corrupted on the subject, as must have been the case if my views are correct.

To this I reply, that I have nothing to do with making such an explanation. I have simply undertaken to shew what was the doctrine of the New Testament writers on the subject, whom I regard only to be of any authority. I contend that the writers of the New Testament have given us a full and satisfactory view of the constitution of christian society, and that nothing was required to make it more efficient than the principles of its constitution as exhibited in the apostolic writings.

But now let me ask in return, what difficulty is there in the supposition that Christianity had become corrupted during the progress of the second and third centuries? That this should have taken place involves no perplexing consideration, for mankind had

already done the same thing in every previous age of Jehovah's providential dealings with them. It was so in the Patriarchal Dispensation. (*Romans* i. 21—23.) It was so with the Jews as we have exhibited the subject in a preceding investigation. And it was expressly foretold by the apostles, (2 *Thess.* ii. 3—12; 1 *Tim.* iv. 1—3; 2 *Tim.* iii. 1—5, &c.) that a similar apostacy should take place among christians. We are therefore under no obligation to shew how the corruption of Christianity was accomplished. It is sufficiently clear that corruption had taken place, whenever we find the established institutions, the prevailing doctrines, or the practices of the christian world to be contrary to or inconsistent with the New Testament.

Taking this principle therefore for our foundation, that the New Testament contains every thing essential to the christian religion, whether as concerns faith, practice, or institution, to which nothing is to be added, or taken away, or made inconsistent with its scope and spirit, it is wholly unessential to the establishment of our argument to shew how or in what manner false constructions were first put upon the New Testament writings, and what corruptions necessarily ensued. And we may further add, that there never was a more palpable "*begging of the question*" than the course adopted by the advocates of a divinely appointed church or clergy, when they undertake to prove their doctrine from the practices of christians of the third, fourth and fifth centuries, for it is nothing else than attempting to shew through the very corruptions and perversions recognized by the primitive christians, that no corruption or perversion had taken place. In other words the very statements they make to prove the apostolicity of their doctrine, we consider to be evidences of the actual corruptions of those times, on the ground that such matters are either inconsistent with, or contrary to, the expositions made in the New Testament.

Yet even on this subject of shewing how the corruption of Christianity took place, notwithstanding the remoteness of the times, and the destruction of the writings of those individuals who in their day opposed the growing corruption, we still have a sufficient amount of evidence by which we can fairly estimate the progressive steps that were taken in the corruption of Christianity, from its commencement until it attained its climax in the recognition of the bishop of Rome as the vicar of Christ, and head of an infallible church. And though it would be entirely supererogatory on our part, after what we have stated above, to go into any exposition of the subject as essential to the value of the arguments we

have maintained, yet as we shall in our next investigation undertake to exhibit the proceedings of mankind under the appointments of the Christian Dispensation, we apprehend the reader will there find abundant evidence both as to when, and how, corruptions took place among the Primitive Christians.

We have no objection to establish these facts, as being essential to a historical exposition of the condition of things in the first three centuries, but we protest against the notion that the constitution of christian society as originally instituted by Christ or his apostles, is to be estimated by any other statements than those recorded in the New Testament.

INVESTIGATION

CONCERNING THE

DEVELOPMENTS OF CHRISTIANITY FROM THE TIME OF ITS PROMULGATION UNTIL THE DOWNFALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE IN THE WEST.

IN preceding portions of this essay, I have attempted to shew how mankind, as free agents, have acted under the several dispensations of Jehovah, from the time of the creation of Adam and Eve until the establishment of the Christian Dispensation, and I trust enough has been exhibited, both as shewing what their Creator required of them, and how they disregarded his appointments, perverted the institutions he gave them, and substituted in their place systems of their own devising which terminated in the most unhappy consequences to themselves.

I am now about to commence a similar exposition to shew how mankind have acted under the appointments of the Christian Dispensation; the result of which will be a full conviction that they also gradually departed from the appointments of Jehovah, and substituted in their place a system of will-worship, which continually increased in its obliquity until the Reformation. From that time, Protestants have been very slowly falling back again on the simplicity of the doctrines and institutions appointed for human observance by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The investigation I am about to commence is of the greatest importance, for Protestants of the present time having made the most erroneous inferences concerning the spiritual condition of the primitive christians, have blindly conceded authority to them as determining doctrines, institutions, and practices, for which we find no warranty in the New Testament. Yet having been established

through long prescription and prejudice, they now exert an injurious influence in misrepresenting the true principles of christian trnht.

Nothing can be more absurd than to suppose that the individuals who first made a profession of Christianity, were in any respect more favored of Jehovah than men of a preceding or succeeding time. The mere accident that the gospel was proclaimed at that partieular period, was indeed so far a privilege to those who then lived, if they made a right use of it, but neither their intellectual nor moral condition as free agents undergoing a probationary discipline on their own responsibilities was affected by the circumstance itself. They were still as ever the same race of men whose natural powers or capacities were and are the same throughout all generations, and hence they were just as likely as other men to fall into delusion and mistake, if they should in the exercise of their free agency neglect the appointments that Jehovah had prescribed them, and should then follow the short-sighted or fallacious views suggested by the perverseness of human reasoning, as misapplied to facts or principles communicated to them by the condescension of the Creator of all things. Mankind under the Patriarchal Dispensation had gone entirely astray; the Jews under the institutions of Moses had entirely corrupted the truth set before them; why then should it be supposed that Christians were to be different from the rest of mankind in this respect and be less liable to error?

The subject of the corruption of primitive Christianity, however, ought to be still more strongly impressed upon our minds, when we reflect that we, as Protestants, so late as the time of the Reformation, or about three hundred years ago, only then emerged from the most stupendous system of corruption and will-worship the world has ever witnessed. The scheme itself, however, was based on Scripture texts, and was justified on the ground of being the positive appointment of Christ, and which the Catholics still zealously contend for at this very time. Seeing then that corruptions of the grossest kind had perverted almost every principle of Christianity during the long continuance of the papal domination, it is of the utmost importance for us to ascertain when these corruptions first took place, for otherwise how can we be confident that in forsaking the Church of Rome, that we have also purified ourselves from the false and presumptuous doctrines, which that corrupt church, for a thousand years preceding the reformation, inculcated as being the very teaching of Christ and his apostles.

That Protestants have not yet accomplished the purification of Christianity, is abundantly evident from the conflicting opinions that yet prevail among them upon almost every subject pertaining to christian doctrine, institution, or practice, and consequently so long as this state of things continues, it is altogether absurd to suppose that this heterogeneous mass of conflicting opinions can be otherwise, more or less, than so many erroneous views of the original system instituted by our Saviour.

A correct estimate of the intellectual and moral proceeding of the professors of Christianity, from the very times of the apostles during the lapse of successive centuries, is therefore essential at the present day to a correct apprehension of Christianity in its entireness as a religious system. For a large portion of the doctrines, institutions, or practices, now prevailing in christendom, will be found to stand only on the authority of the primitive church during the first three or four centuries, as the supposed exponent of the teaching of Christ or of his apostles. So far has this principle been carried out even among Protestants, that where certain matters cannot be directly proved from the New Testament, we are continually enjoined to follow the example or teaching of the primitive church, on the ground that they knew far better than we do at this remote period of time, what was the actual intention of the inspired promulgators of Christianity. But never was any principle of truth more blindly conceded to the establishment of error than such a notion, for why should it be supposed that the evangelists and apostles in their written testimony, have omitted to state any particular belonging to human obligation, whether in doctrine, institution, or practice.* If this view of the subject be correct, it is wholly unjustifiable that we should recognize any thing to be

* That there should have been any portion of Scripture truth made known to the primitive church which is not introduced in the New Testament, is incredible. The apostle Paul in his last exhortation to the church of Ephesus, (*Acts xx. 17, &c.*) asserts this doctrine unequivocally, "*I kept back nothing that was profitable to you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly from house to house,* testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, &c. Wherefore I take you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all men: *for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.*"

If the apostle was thus faithful in preaching the gospel, what can be more unreasonable than to suppose he has omitted to state the gospel equally perspicuously in his Epistles. The perfect coherence and consistency of the subject throughout the whole New Testament is sufficient proof that nothing has been kept back pertaining to the whole practical scheme of Christianity.

essential to Christianity, whatever the primitive church may have taught, that is not clearly addressed to our understanding in the New Testament writings.

If it be wholly unjustifiable that we should entertain any other view of the New Testament writings than that they are to be understood under the strictest interpretation, according to the plainest inferences deducible from the statements there given, then nothing can be more preposterous than to depart from this simple exhibition of things in which the truth has been made known to us by inspired men, and adopt either traditional expositions, or a metaphysical mode of interpreting the simple enunciations of the Scripture, by which a system the very reverse of simplicity or of intelligibility has been established in its place. Yet all this has been done without the least instruction on the part of the apostles, as to the individuals who were to have this authority to control the human mind respecting the meaning of communications made by them. On the contrary, they manifestly assume the principle that every individual was able to comprehend them for himself as far as they were obligatory on his conscience. On this matter we have given abundant proof in the preceding investigation, by shewing that Christ appointed no body of clergy to instruct mankind with authority.

The great error of Protestants on this subject consists in having overlooked the fact, that the Christian Dispensation constitutes but a link in the chain of Jehovah's providential dealings with mankind. In like manner as the Patriarchal and Jewish Dispensations, so Christianity has been addressed to us as free agents of a limited intellectual and moral capacity, who are to accomplish a required degree of perfection, through our own voluntary action. As the Patriarchal and Jewish Dispensations were helps or guides to enable mankind to accomplish this perfection, so is Christianity to the very same purpose, and nothing more. It does not control men by supernatural influences, but it is to assist those who will strive to obtain their salvation. Consequently, as being only an assistance to mankind as free agents who are to accomplish this work for themselves, so Christianity is not exempted from being corrupted by the misapplication of its principles if mankind will depart from the foundation upon which its assistance has been predicated. If then it is the essential condition of mankind at all times that they are to accomplish their perfection through their own instrumentalities, assisted by grace offered them by their Creator on their proper application to him, and then only, it would wholly set aside the

fundamental principle of human free agency if it were impossible for them to pervert or corrupt the principles of christian truth.

If then it be possible for a corruption of Christianity to take place, men of any one age or time are just as likely to have corrupted it as those of any other age or time, and hence there is just as much ground to anticipate that corruptions may have occurred in the very earliest ages of Christianity as at any later period, when we know that corruptions and perversions had assuredly taken place.

But it is superfluous to make any inferences on the subject, for we have in the apostolic Epistles explicit statements as to the perverseness, false reasonings, and false doctrines, that prevailed among the first professors of Christianity, even under the very observation of the apostles.* If this was done during their life

* *Of the errors and heresies existing actually in the days of the Apostles.*

Now I beseech you mark them which cause divisions contrary to the doctrine.
Rom. xvi. 17, 18.

Now I beseech you brethren that there be no divisions among you, The house of Chloe, &c. *1 Cor. i. 10, 11.*

For ye are yet carnal, there is envying, and strife, and divisions. *1 Cor. iii. 3, 4.*

I hear there be divisions among you, and there must be heresies, &c. *1 Cor. xi. 18, 19.*

How say some among you there is no resurrection? *1 Cor. xv. 12.*

We are not as many which corrupt the word of God, &c. *2 Cor. ii. 17.*

St. Paul speaks of his contending with false apostles, &c. *2 Cor. xi. 12, 13.*

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into another gospel. *Gal. i. 6, 7.*

Some indeed preach Christ of envy and strife. *Philip. i. 15.*

For the mystery of iniquity doth already work. *2 Thess. ii. 7.*

From which some have turned aside, &c. desiring to be teachers, &c. *1 Tim. i. 5—7.*

Holding faith of which some have made shipwreck. *1 Tim. i. 19.*

O Timothy avoid profane babblings, which, some professing, have erred. *1 Tim. vi. 20, 21.*

This thou knowest, that all they in Asia have turned away from me. *2 Tim. i. 15.*

Shun profane and vain babblings, Hymeneus and Philetus, who say the resurrection is passed. *2 Tim. ii. 16—18.*

There are many unruly and vain talkers whose mouths must be stopped. *Titus i. 10, 11, 14.*

Even now, there are many *anti-christs*, &c. *1 John ii. 18, 19.*

Believe not every spirit, but try the spirit, for many false prophets are gone out, &c. *1 John iv. 1, 3.*

Many deceivers are entered into the world. *2 John vii.*

I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes receiveth us not. *3 John 9, 10.*

It was needful to exhort you to contend for the faith, certain men have crept in unawares. *Jude 3, 4, 10—14, 17, 18.*

Church of Ephesus, *Rev. ii. 2, 5*; Pergamus, *ii. 14*; Thyatira, *ii. 20*; Sardis, *iii. 1—3*; Laodicea, *iii. 16, 17.*

time, what can we suppose was too unreasonable or anti-christian for them to have done after the apostles had deceased.

It is only by studying ecclesiastical history as contrasted with the New Testament writings, that we can come to a proper estimate of the intellectual and moral condition of the primitive christians, which as exhibiting the gradual process by which the now prevailing doctrines of theological speculation were originally introduced into the church, will thus distinctly shew us the prodigious error that exists among christians in supposing that certain doctrinal speculations, sectarian institutions, or unmeaning practices, prevailing at the present time, were derived from the positive appointments of Christ or the apostles. The majority of Protestants most ignorantly consider that their peculiar sectarian notions were all originally inculcated by the express teaching of the apostles; whereas more or less of these doctrines, institutions, and practices, were brought into Christianity after the time of the apostles, by persons converted from Jews and various philosophizing Gentiles, and those texts of Scripture that are now quoted for their support, were then for the first time, resorted to in order to justify the doctrine or institution they had adopted. Other supposed apostolic institutions were originally mere matters of expediency, or convenience, while some others of our doctrines were presumptuous determinations on abstruse points with which we actually have no concern, so that no matter how much more probable one view of certain speculative doctrines may be than another, yet it is no requirement of Christianity to entertain any positive opinion on the subject.

The only way to estimate this matter properly, will be to shew the christian world how theological speculations were gradually developed amidst distractions and confusions, occasioned by the controversies of men on speculative matters for the most part foreign to Christianity, which will abundantly convince every reasonable man that such controversies could not have taken place had the apostles ever taught any thing formally on such subjects. If we then become convinced of these facts, it is surely our wisdom to detach ourselves from all such matters, and fall back upon what our Saviour or his apostles have expressly required from our obedience, for this is the only way we can expect the blessings promised in the New Testament. We can hold no truth more distinct than this, that though Jehovah will at all times be faithful in observing his covenant, yet it is under the absolute requisition that men shall do what he has required from them, and conse-

quently so far as there is any admixture of will-worship, or alteration of the terms of his requirements, so far at least he leaves mankind to suffer the consequences of their folly and perverseness. Jehovah assuredly will only work on his own plan, and will not lay aside his scheme to co-operate with one of human devising.

The first step towards correctly estimating the character of the primitive christians is, that we rightly appreciate the moral and religious condition of mankind at the time of the promulgation of the gospel, for only in a distinct estimate of this subject can we comprehend the actual development of Christianity, and the intellectual and moral phenomena with which it was accompanied.

In all our ecclesiastical histories there is an abundant exhibition of the great amount of immorality, irreligion, or superstition, that existed previous to the advent, whether among the Jews or the Gentiles, which exposition seems to have been especially made to shew the necessity that the Christian Dispensation should have then been promulgated to counteract a tendency to universal corruption of manners. But though such views are correct to a certain extent, yet we must not go to the extreme insisted upon by ecclesiastical historians as to the absolute extent of such corruption. There was at this time a great intellectual and moral preparation among mankind for the reception of the gospel, and there were numerous individuals both among the Jews and the heathens, who were conscientious and virtuous men, who sought the favor of their Creator in those ways that were commended to them, either as Jews through the requirements of the Mosaic institutions, or as heathens through the observance of those moral duties, which mankind in every age have agreed, do constitute the perfection of human character.

So far as these observations apply to the Jews, the fact that there were many righteously disposed men among them may be verified, not only from the individual instances mentioned in the New Testament, such as the father and mother of John the Baptist, Simeon and Anna, but also in that moral predisposition through which so many Jews attended the ministry of John the Baptist, who confessing their sins were baptized by him under a promise of repentance. The same inference may also be applied to the multitudes who "*gladly heard*" our Saviour preaching on those things that he taught concerning the kingdom of heaven.

Among the Gentiles we also have sufficient information from the histories of those times, that there were numerous individuals who lived virtuous lives so far as they comprehended the principles of

moral action. Such conduct being commended to the understanding of every intelligent person as the sources of individual or general happiness, it was impossible they could overlook the essential principles of morality whether as concerned themselves or their fellow men. We may mention the ethical teaching of the Greek and Roman philosophers as being sufficient evidence for the truth of our general statement, without enumerating individuals.

At the time our Saviour came upon the earth, the Jewish people were mainly divided into two sects, well known to the readers of the New Testament as the Pharisees and Sadducees. Besides these we find mentioned by Josephus and other coterminous writers certain smaller sects whom they designated as Essenes, Theraputæ, &c. concerning whom we have only a limited information.

The Pharisees, who were the most numerous sect among the Jews, were essentially formalists devoted to a scrupulous observance of the Mosaic institutions, not however in their simplicity of enactment, but as disfigured by the perverse and often whimsical interpretations of their elders and rabbis, who as we have already shewn, (Vol. I. 486, &c.) had in great measure set aside the spirituality of the law, and had substituted in its place a gross will-worship, consisting of a multitude of trifling and superstitious observances which they considered would render them acceptable to their Creator. The Pharisees believed in a future state of reward or punishment proportionate to human conduct in the present life, though it is most probable they restricted any immortality of condition to persons only of Jewish descent.

The Sadducees rejected all those traditional expositions of the law of Moses which were so strictly observed by the Pharisees: they considered that the Mosaic economy only regarded the present life, since nothing had been inculcated by the Jewish legislator upon the subject of a future state. Hence they denied any existence to the human spirit after death, and considered that virtue or vice were rewarded or punished during the present life. They appear however to have sincerely regarded the law of Moses as being from divine appointment, and they conformed accordingly with more or less devotion to all its literal requirements.

The Essenes and Theraputæ, were Jewish mystics, who lived chiefly in Syria and Egypt. They rejected in great measure the plain meaning of the Old Testament Scriptures, and endeavored to live according to a mystical interpretation of its literal teaching. They passed much of their time in mental abstraction,

fasted often, and those who more especially sought perfection abstained from marriage, and every pleasure of sense.

I do not deem it important to be more explicit in explaining the peculiar notions of the several Jewish sects; if further information be desired, it can be readily obtained from any ecclesiastical dictionary, or from the prefatory remarks at the commencement of all general ecclesiastical histories.*

But though the prominent divisions among the Jews at this time were as we have just stated them, yet we should fall into some degree of misjudgment on the subject, if we did not make a correct estimate of the circumstances under which these several sects existed. Our acquaintance with human nature must satisfy us at once that there was not only a considerable body of Jews who strictly speaking were neither Pharisee, Sadducee, or Esselian, and who consequently cared little about religious doctrines, but there were also necessarily persons of all intermediate varieties of opinion among the different sects, for there never yet was a sect or party in the world in which there was not an ultra, medium, and little concerned body of adherents.

The like distinctions were to be observed among the philosophic sects of the ancient heathens. There were not only the great outlines of different modes of thinking, such as the systems of the Stoics, Epicureans, Academics, &c. but there were in each of them minor subdivisions of opinion from an ultra dogmatism to an almost entire indifference on the subject, as well as a greater or less compromise of opinions in mitigated views of their truth or importance which it would be impossible to enumerate.

The religious condition of the common class of pagans at the time of the promulgation of Christianity was very deplorable. They were either altogether irreligious, or absurdly superstitious. The one class lived in the commission of any crime that tended to personal gratification, without fear of future retribution, and the other sought the favor of the numerous deities worshipped at those times, through rites and sacrifices made by them under the delusion that the gods could be thus bribed to bestow favors upon those who sought them merely for selfish purposes.

The more intellectual class of heathens, and who were by no means a small body, despised the prevailing superstitions. They commonly rejected the deities of the popular worship and recog-

* A better account of the Essenes and Theraputæ than is found in our ordinary compends, may be seen in "Ruffner's *Fathers of the Desert*, i. 160, 169." Kitto's *Cyclop. Bib. Lit.*

nized in their place a deity or deities of an abstract moral and intellectual excellence. But whether these divinities exercised any providence towards mankind, or whether they regarded any act of human adoration, were subjects on which they differed very widely.

The Greek philosophy, which at this time constituted a part of the education of all wealthy and influential persons, was directed to the elucidation of three different subjects, *viz.* legislation, or art of civil government, morals, and metaphysics. But for some time previous to the advent of Christ, the philosophers had been more especially engaged in speculations as to how they might attain to happiness in the present life, in connection however, with some uncertain opinions respecting the conditions of virtuous and vicious men after death. Hence their disquisitions on the subject of the *summum bonum*, or chief good of mankind; some placing it in the exercise of the personal and social virtues, and others in pleasurable gratifications, though even these last admitted, that their indulgences should be regulated by justice and temperance, however remiss they might be in the practical application of the rule.

The notions of the philosophers on the subject of morals were generally correct, their views of legislation would have been very reasonable had they not recognized a principle of patriotism that allowed justice might be dispensed with for the benefit of one's own country. This position however, had been distinctly controverted by some very eminent philosophers, who maintained that justice ought always to be observed even towards an avowed enemy.

As respected their metaphysical speculations, they had for the second time in the history of Greek philosophy found a termination in scepticism, *i. e.* an utter uncertainty as to what they ought to believe concerning the subjects of God, providence, nature, or mankind. As this scepticism was the result of very long and subtle disputations by some of the most acute and ingenious men the world has ever seen, it was in fact a great intellectual preparation for the reception of the simple truths of Christianity. Men were thus, indirectly at least, rendered capable of reasoning intellectually on that subject, from the utter impossibility of ascertaining aught concerning the nature, attributes, and providence of the Creator of the universe, through philosophical reasoning.* Hence all honest

*This circumstance may be estimated by the following observation; "Arnobius informs us," (*Lardner Credibil. &c.*) "that not a few heathens of his time were so

seekers after truth would, through this circumstance be predisposed to accept a demonstration of Christianity through the evidences that were afforded, either by the system itself as being irreconcileable with human invention, or as being sustained by the miraculous powers then actually exercised by the apostles and earlier proselytes of the gospel.

This important fact of the inconclusiveness and vanity of Greek metaphysics, we more especially insist upon, because the corruptions that took place afterwards in Christianity essentially proceeded from speculations derived from the Greek philosophy, or other systems, through the influence of intellectual christians. In this they were wholly inexcusable, for the philosophers themselves had been brought down to utter uncertainty upon all such subjects, and every intellectual christian ought to have been thus fully convinced, that christian truth did not stand in the wisdom of man, but was founded on *an express appointment of Jehovah*.

Another most important element towards appreciating the condition of the human mind at the time the gospel was first promulgated, was that system of religious notions that is now designated as the Oriental Philosophy, so called from its prevalence in Egypt, Hindostan, and other countries to the east of Europe, and which gradually exerted a most pernicious influence upon Christianity during the first and second centuries under the name of Gnosticism.*

Without perplexing the reader with the boundless extravagances of the theological portion of this Oriental Philosophy, we shall only state, that the foundation upon which it was constructed seems to have been, the difficulty of accounting for the origin of *moral and physical evil*. But whatever mode they suggested to explain the supposed anomaly, they all agreed that essentially the principle of evil was inherent in *matter*, which they regarded as being so entirely malignant and intractable in its nature, that even the benevolent Creator of all things could not overcome its inherent evil constitution.

As these philosophers considered man to consist of an ethereal principle or soul united to a material body, so they taught that the

much offended at Cicero for the freedom he had taken in exposing some of their absurd sentiments concerning their deities, and that his writings were so serviceable to the christian cause, that some people (heathens) were for having his works, or some of them at least, destroyed or prohibited by order of the senate.”

*There is a very brief though very philosophical estimate of the theory of Gnosticism in *Ruffner's Fathers of the Desert*, i. 213, &c.

perverseness and wickedness of man arose from the influence of the *evil material* of which the body was composed, and therefore, to enable the soul to obtain its spiritual perfection, they taught that the body must be subjected to the harshest discipline. No animal propensity to gratification was to be indulged, as pleasure of every kind was regarded as being injurious to the welfare of the soul. Living therefore, in self-denial of every thing grateful to the body, and employing the mind in devout abstractions from all sensible objects, the followers of this Oriental Philosophy awaited the time when the soul should be separated by death from the corrupt body, to receive a blissful absorption into the essential presence of the Supreme Lord of the Universe.*

Holding such notions as these, the followers of the Oriental Philosophy then employed every mode of maceration that could be suggested by a perverse ingenuity. They abjured all sexual intercourse, they wholly abstained from eating flesh or drinking wine, they lived upon herbs and pulse of the least succulent kinds, and even this temperance was intermitted with frequent and long continued fastings. The modes still employed by the Bramins of India in their fantastic self-tortures, are all deductions connected with some modification or other of this Oriental Philosophy.

The influence of this irrational ascetism was very great upon mankind, naturally prone to will-worship and superstitious practices, for the austerities they thus witnessed overpowered all mistrust as to the sincerity of such devotees, and at the same time alarmed them on account of their own sins, which if they could not resolve to expiate by like modes of life, filled them with admiration of those who could thus triumph over the weakness of human nature. The influence of this system greatly prepared mankind for the reception of those ascetic practices which afterwards prevailed so extensively to the corruption of christian simplicity.

In the last place, as necessary to comprehend the condition of human society at the time that Christianity was promulgated, we must call the attention of our readers to the personal character of the individuals who first professed themselves the disciples of Jesus Christ. It is a great misfortune that men have wholly overlooked

* The doctrine of absorption does not imply annihilation, but such a proximity to the divine source of being that their existence as individuals is so blended in the effulgence of the Creator of all things, that they are no longer discernable. This is evident from the illustration given in the *Dabistan*, i. 83: (transl.) "that when the sun of the first cause manifests himself, then apparently all created beings, like the stars in the sun's light, are absorbed in his divine effulgence."

the fact that persons of that day did not differ in any respect from those of the present time. Men of all bodily temperaments, all degrees of intellect, and of all moral sensibilities, met together under the first preaching of the gospel as professors of Christianity, and consequently, as such, the convictions or inducements under which they became christians were very different. Whilst some embraced the truth with a thorough conviction, and with their whole heart and strength, there were others who did so with less intelligence, less earnestness, and less sincerity, and these were followed by others of still lower moral qualifications, until at last we come to such persons as Simon Magus, Ananias, Sapphira, &c. who were any thing but sincere or honest.

This heterogeneous assemblage of all sorts of persons in a common profession of Christianity is abundantly evident from the several writings of the apostles, who though distinctly recognizing the simplicity of faith and purity of motive that characterized the bulk of these disciples, yet at the same time they as continually complain of the perverseness and intractability of others. They expressly speak of some who sought temporal advantages under a profession of Christianity, "thinking that godliness was gain." Others, as men of perverse and disputatious tempers. Others, who turned the grace of God into licentiousness; while others again were weak, indocile, and perversely wedded to various prejudices which they persisted in contrary to the direct teaching of the apostles.

In short, it is impossible to have any other view of the intellectual and moral condition of the first professors of Christianity, than as exhibited by that parable of our Saviour, (*Math. xiii. 47, 48,*) who compares the promulgation of the doctrines of the kingdom of heaven to a net let down to the sea, and which enclosed all sorts of fish. This was the first effect, the separation of the good from the bad was reserved for an after scrutiny, which we very distinctly comprehend will only take place at that final judgment when Christ himself shall determine who are his true disciples.

It being impossible that any one acquainted with early ecclesiastical history should contest the accuracy of the statements just made, it must follow conclusively, that nothing can be more unjustifiable than the views that men in our day commonly entertain concerning the supposed purity of the primitive christians. To properly appreciate the subject, the reader must generalize what we have already exhibited, not only concerning the personal character, and the personal motives under which individuals embraced

Christianity, but also as men more or less influenced by their previous notions, whether as deduced from Judaism or from the speculations and practices pertaining to the Greek or Oriental systems of philosophy. It is a most unwarrantable notion to presume the Holy Spirit operated upon them by any supernatural influence as subduing all hearts, and all beliefs, and all inclinations, into one harmonious and spiritually-minded body of men. The Spirit of Jehovah was undoubtedly communicated to those who earnestly sought after it, but then only so far as was consistent with his determined purposes with mankind, as free agents who were to accomplish a perfection according to human and not superhuman capacities. Christianity was not intended to effect any change in that probationary discipline which Jehovah has appointed for all human action. Mankind were still as at every previous stage of their social existence, free agents who were required to accomplish their salvation through their own exertions, for however accessible the grace of God was made to mankind, still the obtaining the benefits of these great privileges was left to human free agency, so that if any one forbore to exercise himself as Jehovah required, nothing would result to him from the proffered grace of the Creator of all things.

It now only remains for us to recall to the reader's consideration in the briefest manner we can, the actual theory under which Christianity was announced as regulating the intellectual and moral action of all professors of the gospel, whether as concerned the modes through which they were to attain to the perfection required of them, or the manner in which they were to exercise those privileges through which they would be sustained by Jehovah towards attaining their perfection.

The Creator of all things who through the institutions of the Mosaic Economy had been previously sought after or worshipped as Jehovah king of the Jewish people, by an astonishing condescension, under the theory of the Christian Dispensation, announced himself to mankind as the common FATHER of all persons, without distinction of race, who would seek his favor through Jesus Christ as the Messiah. The Creator henceforth assumed the position of being *a father*, and that all christian believers were *his children*. These terms are constantly used throughout the New Testament with the evident intention of forcibly impressing on the minds of christians, the affectionate nature of the relation henceforth existing between the Creator of all things and those who would avail themselves of the privileges thus graciously offered to mankind.

In view therefore of this relation of children to a father, which we have already insisted on at length at page 85, &c. all christians were privileged to ask all things directly from Jehovah by prayer offered in the name of Jesus Christ, consistently however with that prime condition of things by which mankind, as being constituted free agents of a sufficient intellectual and moral capacity, were consequently to accomplish a required perfection through their own voluntary action.

By the peculiarity of this relation of father and children, so perfectly comprehensible to us, and which we insist upon designates the very essence of doctrinal Christianity, we distinctly perceive why no outward ceremonial of intercourse was henceforth required between the Creator and his privileged creature, under the institutions of Christianity. Nay, we have previously shewn that even under the Jewish Dispensation, Jehovah did not require any formal worship from the Jews, (Vol. I. 424,) though by the appointment of sacrifices, set days, and annual festivals, he afforded them opportunities for so doing. But in the establishment of Christianity, the relation of father and children having been graciously recognized by Jehovah, he required from them as such, nothing formal or ritual, and hence he appointed no festivals, fasts, or particular days to be observed in a religious manner. Even the sabbath, so highly magnified in the Mosaic economy, was no longer to be regarded; for christians were required to live righteously every moment of their lives, their religion was to be in the very actions of life, they were to be influenced by it in every thought, word, and deed, and they had the privilege of holding immediate communion with Jehovah through Jesus Christ at any time, and at any place, under every circumstance and condition of being.

But though no external form was given to Christianity as a religious system, men were at liberty to adopt any institution among themselves *that might be expedient either to edification, or as encouraging each other to maintain their christian profession.* But any idea of worshipping Jehovah as a matter of formal duty or obligation, was wholly foreign to any doctrine inculcated in the New Testament, and the ordinary notions prevailing among christians on this subject have been in every age the fertile source of errors and absurdities.* Men have entirely overlooked the fact that it is im-

* That the primitive christians did not assemble for the object of *worship* but of instruction, is evident from the fact, that the public prayers did not *precede*, but followed the reading of Scripture and exhortation. Justin Martyr is express on this point. Indeed they actually dismissed all but the initiated before the prayers were made.—See *Bingham, Antiq. &c. lib. xiv. ch. 5.*

possible for the *creature* to do any thing in itself inherently acceptable to the *Creator*, and consequently when he has not required any such service from mankind, it is presumptuous on their part, and as such offensive to him, that they should undertake to appoint one of their own devising.

Therefore to worship God, or to glorify him as it is sometimes expressed in the Scripture, means nothing else than doing what he has commended to our observance, either as being matters of moral obligation on our part, or as being institutions that he has appointed as remedial of our transgressions. Any other modes than these are not only absurd—they are altogether presumptuous and sinful. It is treating Jehovah as if he was like a vain man gratified with ostentatious services or ceremonies.

Our false ideas upon this subject at the present day, may be distinctly referred to our origin from the church of Rome at the time of the Reformation, when the universal doctrine prevailed that recognized a direct glorification of God by the services that men offered to him. And so deeply has this notion been engrafted into the minds of christians, that Protestants still consider it to be a *religious duty* to go to church, where having reverently listened to the clergyman, having joined in the prayers, united with the choir in singing, with a full approbation of all they heard, they then go home under the belief that they have discharged a religious duty required from them by their Creator, and that having thus rendered an acceptable service to God, they anticipate his grace and mercy will be communicated to them.

But all these inferences are wholly unjustifiable. Instead of regarding the matter in such a light, any opportunity of addressing themselves to Jehovah, is simply a *privilege* offered to them by him in his infinite condescension as promising to answer devout prayer, not as having been made in a church, but wherever men may choose to avail themselves of their privilege in that respect.

But what is devout prayer? It is an earnest heartfelt supplication to God that he will grant us pardon, or bestow spiritual or temporal blessings *upon us*. Praises for mercies received he has not required from us, and if not really sincere expressions of gratitude are a downright mockery, a contemptible flattery of the lips, that would be regarded even by a man as an insult. How much more offensive then must it appear in the view of the Almighty, that when he has by a most wonderful condescension promised to hear the prayers of the creatures he has made; that they should pervert their privilege in such a manner as to suppose they were

thus personally offering an acceptable service to their Creator for which they anticipate a blessing from him.

In opposition to the gross though common notions on this subject, we again urge upon the reader the consideration, that Jehovah in the promulgation of the gospel condescended to place himself in the position of a Father to all christian believers, and authorized them to come at once into his presence by prayer and obtain pardon for sin, as well as all grace and blessing by simply asking them from him through Jesus Christ. The inestimable privileges flowing from this condescension of the Creator of all things, was thus made available to every christian who might choose to use them. Yet if any were so absurd as not to appreciate their privileges, or so irreligious as to disregard them, they were only concerned in the consequences that might follow. It signified nothing to Jehovah if men forbore *to ask blessings from him, for themselves*, their neglect was to their own hurt, it could not affect the divine complacency. He did not therefore in any Dispensation ever made to mankind require *as a matter of duty or obligation*, that men should pray to him for blessings for themselves; consequently to suppose that Jehovah can be gratified by a formal ritual of prayers or ceremonies of any kind, is to entertain not only the most unworthy notions of the deity, but it is wholly inexcusable, seeing that such things have been universally treated by him with expressions of contempt throughout the whole volume of Scripture.

This subject however can only be fairly appreciated by a distinct comprehension of the peculiarities upon which christian societies were constituted. We therefore inform our readers, that the christians of the first century were not an association of persons, who, as holding peculiar religious opinions, assembled together on Sunday for the purpose of religious worship, as is now done by our different sectarian denominations, and who after the public services of the day then separate until the ensuing Sunday again brings them together. On the contrary, the first christians were a *fraternity*, an association of brethren, whose bond of union was a principle of brotherly love, whereby they were bound to assist and promote each other's welfare whether in temporal or spiritual matters. Their organization as to its external peculiarities may be more clearly appreciated through the medium of the institutions of the Free Masons, or Odd Fellows, who as independent associations exist in the midst of our present civil institutions, governed or regulated by a constitution adopted among themselves.

In like manner the christians of the first century in the midst of surrounding fellow-citizens, constituted a peculiar association of brethren regulated by the principle of christian love.* Their leaders or directors indefinite as to number, were termed indifferently elders or bishops, and any subordinate function was fulfilled by others who bore the general name of deacons or ministers, terms at that time of ordinary significance with which the Jewish christians had long been familiar.

When these congregations came together in the apostolic age, they did not assemble together with any view of worshipping God, as we have just stated, but exclusively for purposes of mutual edification, or to regulate their general concerns. Yet as they considered themselves to be always under the paternal care and providence of Jehovah, they devoutly sought a blessing from him upon their assembly. On such occasions after their prayer, the simple principles of the christian faith were proclaimed to the assembly, either by their elders or any other competent persons, who exhorted them to continue in the faith, who encouraged them in times of persecution, or who brought before the congregation any matter interesting to them whether in a spiritual or temporal point of view. Before they separated they ordinarily partook of a common and temperate meal, sometimes preceeded, and at other times followed by the commemoration of our Saviour's last supper.

Nothing therefore could be more intelligible and simple than the theory of Christianity during the first century. It was involved with no abstract or metaphysical speculations. Jehovah was represented as the Creator and sustainer of all things in the simple statement. Jesus Christ was the Saviour of mankind, their advocate and mediator, and who ultimately would be their judge, but without any exposition as to his absolute nature. All the benefits resulting from faith in him, were anticipated by regarding him in his official character as the Messiah. Mankind were universally represented as being sinners before Jehovah, but there was no abstruse theory as to why they were so. Neither was any doctrine necessary on the subject, for be it from whatever cause it might, their evident interest was to escape the condemnation announced against human sin, by availing themselves of the salvation offered through Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit was expected to be given to all who would seek it, but without any theory of its nature or procession, all that was required of them was that they

* See our previous remarks on this peculiar conditions of things.—Vol. II. 181, &c.

should seek after the promised grace. The whole moral obligation of Christianity was distinctly recognized in the injunction, “ *Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye also unto them,*” a principle of moral government that controls all human free agency, whether for doing good or not doing wrongfully, and which no honest man can ever misapprehend as to its application, for no condition of circumstances can possibly exist that will not be instantly solved the moment the question is asked, how would I like another person to act under similar circumstances towards me?

Such being the principles by which all religious or moral action was to be determined, christians were required to live without sin, but if they did transgress in any manner through the infirmity of human nature, then in all godly sorrow for their offence, and with firm purpose to act differently for the future, they were to beseech Jehovah as their Father to forgive them for Christ’s sake. Thus John in his first Epistle, *ch. ii.* verse first, says, “ my little children, (*i. e.* my dearest children,) these things I write unto you *that ye sin not;* and, (*it ought to be but,*) if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, (*in*) Jesus Christ the righteous.”

While it was therefore of the greatest importance that christians should assemble themselves together to be reminded of the theory of their moral obligations, of the requirement from them of personal holiness, to be instructed concerning the privileges belonging to them as children of God, and members of Christ’s kingdom, or be exhorted to be faithful in the discharge of every duty connected with the christian profession, there was nothing in all this that required the services of a philosopher or theologian. Any devout person of ordinary intelligence, with a sufficient facility to express himself clearly, was all that was requisite either to exhort or instruct, for to instruct at these times only signified to communicate the simple fact of christian duties or privileges, and not to explain them as a system of speculative divinity.*

* The extreme simplicity of the doctrinal teaching among the earlier christians may be inferred from their creeds. The earliest of these that we possess, is that of Irenæus in the second century. (*Bingham, Antiq. Christ. Church, lib. x. chap. 4.*) It recognizes the belief in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and all things therein; and in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who was incarnate for our salvation, and in the Holy Ghost who preached by the prophets the dispensations of God concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, his resurrection from the dead, his ascension into heaven, and his coming again to raise all men from the dead, at which time they shall be judged according to their works.

The reader who will examine Bingham, as above quoted, will find numerous other creeds of a latter time, each adding additional particulars according to the

The ceremonial institutions of the Mosaic economy had been totally abolished, and no other ritual observances were appointed in their stead, unless in the simple matter of baptizing new converts, or in commemorating the last supper of our Lord, and these any devout person was perfectly competent to administer, though for sake of order we may presume they were generally left under the control of their elders or leaders.

There were no festivals, fasts, nor particular days appointed for christian observance, not even the sabbath, as we have already stated.* But as it was essential they should meet together for edification and mutual encouragement, or to concert measures that regarded the common welfare, they selected for the day of their assembling the first day of the week, as being the one on which Christ rose from the dead, but there is not the smallest authority from the New Testament, or from the ecclesiastical writings of the first three centuries, to suppose they regarded it as a substitute for the Jewish sabbath. The ordinary reasoning upon this subject is, that as the Jews had previously always met for religious worship on the Saturday or the sabbath, so the primitive christians met together on Sunday or the first day of the week, for their religious purposes. It is therefore assumed they must have regarded that day under apostolic appointment as the christian sabbath. All this reasoning however, is based upon a *non sequitur*, and proceeds from an entire ignorance of Jewish customs at these times. We have already shewn, Vol. I. 504, &c. that the Jews were in the habit of assembling at the synagogue on our Mondays and Thursdays, in a semi-religious manner, as well as on the sabbath, and it is therefore wholly begging the question, to assume that the first christians, who were Jews, met together on the first day of the week or our Sunday to observe it in place of the sabbath, and not as a substitute for their ordinary Monday or Thursday meetings. Our general view of the subject however, is fully sustained by various passages of the New Testament, which in mentioning the assemblies of christians on the first day of the week, never give us the

theological controversies that gradually took the place of true religion during the first four centuries.

* Hence the observation of Origen to the charge of the Jews as brought forward by Celsus. (*Origen contra Celsus, lib. ii. chap. 1.*) “Is there any impiety to have ABOLISHED circumcision of the flesh, the ceremonial distinctions concerning food, the observation of carnal festivals, the new moons, and the sabbath, that the soul might be elevated to the spiritual and true sense of the law, which is only worthy of the majesty of God.”

least reason to suppose they regarded it otherwise than the conventional observance of a day which they must necessarily appoint, in order to arrange matters belonging to the common welfare. Paul certainly could not have regarded the Sunday as a substitute for the sabbath, or he never would have written to the Colossians, *chap. ii. 16*, "Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath, which are a shadow of things to come," &c. How could he have written this if he believed the fourth commandment of the decalogue to be of perpetual obligation, or that the apostles had transferred the observance of one day for another? Would he not have stated this transference and required his disciples to honor the first day of the week henceforth in that point of view? There is not however a single passage in the whole New Testament that says a word bearing upon any such supposed obligation.*

That the observance of Sunday as a day of abstraction from all worldly employments, and which if employed in religious exercises is most highly beneficial, there can be no doubt, and no one will more strongly acknowledge the advantages resulting from such an observance than I do, but I contend it is wholly unjustifiable to regard the observance as being from divine appointment.† It is an

* Indeed it is incredible that the first christians could have entertained any such notion, for it is evident from other statements in the Acts, that thirty years after Christ's crucifixion, the christian brethren, apostles, &c. (*Acts xxi. 18—24*,) were then fully persuaded it was essential they should strictly conform to the law of Moses, in which the observance of the seventh day as the sabbath, was one of the most prominent appointments. To suppose that the Judaizing believers who were at this time "*zealous for the observance of the law*," recognized the substitution of our Sunday for their sabbath, is by far too great a concession to be granted without the most direct and positive testimony,

Why the primitive christians had selected the first day of the week for the appointed time of their meeting is stated distinctly by Justin Martyr, (who lived A. D. 140,) and which as estimated by the arguments given by him, is conclusive against any idea of its being a substitution for the Jewish sabbath.

"We all of us assemble together on Sunday," says Justin, (*Transl. by Chevalier, 276.*) "because it is the first day in which God changed darkness and matter and made the world. On the same day also Jesus Christ our Saviour rose from the dead. For he was crucified the day before that of Saturn, and on the day after that of Saturn, which is the day of the Sun, he appeared to his apostles and disciples and taught them what we now submit to your consideration."

† It may not be amiss to sustain this assertion by the authority of some eminent Protestant divines who have expressed themselves distinctly as to the fact that our Sunday is not of any apostolic appointment.

Among such we enumerate Luther, (*Michelet's Life of, &c. 183.*) Calvin, *Institutes, lib. ii chap. 8.*) Bucer, Peter Martyr, &c. (*Milton, Christ. Doct. ii. 310.*) Milton himself as before, Jeremy Taylor, (*Duct. Dubit. lib. ii. chap. 2.*) Michael

act of our own free agency, and like every other action that tends to the attainment of religious perfection will be blessed of him who can comprehend the desires and purposes of the children of men.

Under such a condition of things as we have contended for in the preceding pages, the body of christian believers existed during the later portion of the first century; each congregation superintended by devout persons termed indifferently elders or bishops, who were wholly independent of other congregations except in the mere sympathies of a common faith.

As long as the individual apostles lived who had originally converted such congregations to Christianity, they necessarily possessed great influence with them, and though they encountered no little opposition on various occasions from persons affected by Jewish or Heathen prejudices, as well as from personal considerations on the part of others of a greater or less unjustifiable origin, yet they were able for the most part to repress the grosser improprieties or irregularities that had already began to appear in christian communities, (see note, page 241.) But after the apostles had deceased, as they neither left any successors, nor appointed any corporation of ministers of the gospel to superintend the common interests of Christianity, each congregation was necessarily left to regulate its own concerns. And very soon afterwards in consequence of losing sight of the true theory of Christianity, and the

lis, (*Com. Law Moses*, art. 249.) Neander, (*Church Hist.* 184, 185.) Dr. Arnold, (*Life and Corresp.* 377, &c.) Archbishop Whately, (*Essays, 2d Series, note B to page 185,*) &c. &c.

Archbishop Whately in his work *On Kingdom of Christ, Essay 2d, sec. 29*, has made some excellent observations bearing on this subject to which I request the reader's attention. "Nothing is in reality gained by endeavoring to add force to sound reasons by the addition of unsound ones. To seek, when men will not listen to valid arguments, for some other arguments to which they will listen, will, I am convinced, (to say nothing of its unfairness,) be found in the end to be unwise policy." To this he has added a note to the following purport: "For instance, the view taken of the Lord's day as a church festival observed in memory of Christ's resurrection on the first day of the week, and not in compliance with the Mosaic law, I have seen objected to on the ground, 'that men are apt not to pay so much deference to the enactments of the church, as to express commands of Scripture.' That is to say, although the Mosaic law be not really binding on christians, yet it is advisable to teach men that it is, in order that they may the more readily observe the Lord's day. The church therefore is to be represented, and that to men who by supposition are disposed to undervalue church authority, as having taken the liberty to alter a divine commandment of acknowledged obligation, by changing the *seventh day of the week for the first*, in compliance with a supposed tradition that the apostles sanctioned this transference of the sabbath, which it is plain from the Scripture they did not," &c.

end for which they especially assembled themselves, they appear to have become distracted by the misjudgment or proud conceit of individuals among them, who through human infirmity regarded themselves or their opinions more than they did the spiritual welfare of the congregations to which they belonged.

The causes of this confusion can be readily estimated by advert-
ing to the intellectual condition of mankind at these times, when the earliest preachers of the gospel continually enlarged the body of christian believers by conversions from Jews and Gentiles. On this subject we have been sufficiently explicit, at page 243. When persons holding opinions such as we have there enumerated were converted to the christian faith, it was utterly impossible they could divest themselves of all those trains of thought and subjects of speculation that had previously exerted an influence over them; nay, they were continually engaged with unbelievers in discussing such matters, whether as confuting them, or as vindicating the doctrines of the christian faith, which necessarily opposed the mythology or philosophy of all the nations around.

In a very little time, the notions and opinions of christians on speculative subjects began to have a reflex operation on the doctrines of Christianity itself; even in the days of the apostles we find frequent allusions to false doctrines and heresies among the general body of christians, which we have sufficient light to discern originated in the prejudices of those, who, though they had embraced Christianity, yet mingled in their profession no small leaven of Judaism, and of Gentile philosophy.

Thus we find in various parts of Paul's Epistles, that many of the Jews converted to Christianity obstinately adhered to the Mosaic institutions, and observed circumcision, the distinction of clean and unclean meats, the sabbath, and other festival days of that Economy, and notwithstanding the express teaching of Paul to the contrary, they zealously pressed the observance of these things upon the infant christian church as matters essential to ultimate salvation.

We also find certain indications of the influence of the Oriental philosophy among the first christians, in the practices of those whom Paul calls weak, who would not eat flesh, but who lived upon herbs. We also find the practice of worshipping angels, and a denial of the resurrection of the dead, doubtless on the principle that as they supposed it implied the resurrection of the *material body*, so they assumed it never could be sufficiently purified as mat-

ter, from its inherent malignity, for the spiritual enjoyments of heaven.

We also find in the New Testament cautions addressed to believers against philosophy, *i. e.* abstract speculations on subjects that had no practical bearing upon christian perfection as required by the law of Christ, which observations sufficiently shew, that individuals had already began to perplex the minds of simpler christians with notions derived from the Greek or Oriental schemes of philosophy.

In consequence of the disturbances excited from these causes, Paul expressly warns his immediate disciples as to the fact, that false teachers, false apostles, false prophets, were abroad among them, who not only were preaching false doctrines, but that some were doing so from selfish motives, "thinking godliness to be a gainful matter." He moreover warned them that these things would eat as a canker, (*2 Tim. ii. 17,*) and increase more and more until Christianity itself would be gradually turned into fables and silly stories such as those related by old women; and ultimately that there would be an entire falling away from christian truth, and a downright anti-christian system would be developed in its place.*

If such a condition of things already existed during the days of the apostles, it is very easy to estimate what occurred after their

* After my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also, of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch and remember, that for the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one, night and day, with tears.—*Acts xx. 28—32.*

For there must be heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.—*1 Cor. xi. 19.*

There shall be a falling away first, and then shall be revealed the man of sin and son of perdition, &c. Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions (this word ought to be *doctrines*) which ye have been taught whether by word or our epistle.—*2 Thes. ii. 3—15.*

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But continue in the things thou hast learned, &c. and that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith, which is in Christ Jesus.—*2 Tim. iii. 1—17.*

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. *2 Tim. iv. 3, 4.*

But as there were false prophets also among the people, (the Jews of old time) even so shall there be false teachers among you, who shall privily bring in damnable heresies, &c. And many shall follow their pernicious ways, &c.—*2 Peter ii. 1, 2.*

decease, when the various conflicting elements existing in the constitution of christian society, had full room to work without any other opposition than the remonstrances of mere ordinary devout persons. We therefore can be at no loss to understand how rapidly Christianity became corrupted during the unrecorded history of events in the first and second centuries,* for by the middle of the third century, or two hundred and fifty years after the birth of Christ, we have a full exhibition of the fact, in the high estimation in which fasting, celibacy, and other ascetical practices were regarded, in the undue reverence paid to the memory of martyrs and confessors, in considering the sacraments to be sanctifying ordinances, in the multiplication of religious ceremonies introduced as pertaining to a service of will-worship directly offered to Jehovah, and in the still greater corruption of having advanced their elders and deacons to a priestly organization, which was maintained to be from divine institution and appointment.

From our experience concerning the general infirmity of human nature, and especially from our knowledge of the peculiar notions that influenced the body of primitive christians, as derived from persons holding the notions that characterized Judaism, or the Greek or Oriental systems of philosophy, we can with the greatest plausibility infer the peculiar corruptions severally introduced by them into the simple faith of christians as originally instituted by the apostles. The first innovations on this subject may be referred to Jewish prejudices concerning the ceremonial law, and institutions of the Mosaic Dispensation. Where they were unable to introduce such matters directly into Christianity, they indirectly modified Christianity so as to conform it to Jewish notions by overstrained refinements, or by inducing the belief that Christianity was a literal, and not a spiritual development of the Mosaic Economy.

* This circumstance has been remarked by many ecclesiastical historians. *Bloomfield, Crit. Digest.* viii. 319, states that "Vitrunga in a very learned *Dissert. Obs. Sacr. L. 4*, proves that there was a great alteration in the face of the christian church between the time of Nero and Trajan," (i. e. between A. D. 53 and 98,) "within which period he apprehends great numbers of professors to have departed from the strictness of christian morals as well as the purity of the faith."

The author of *Ancient Christianity*, page 105, has also expressed himself to the same purport. "What I am peculiarly desirous to place in a conspicuous position is the fact, that instead of a regular and slow development of error, there was a very early expansion of false and pernicious notions in their mature proportions, and these attended by some of their worst fruits."

But there can be no evidence stronger on this subject than the book of Revelations, written A. D. 96 or 97, which distinctly charges the seven churches in Asia Minor with great corruptions both of doctrine and life. See *Rev. chaps. ii. and iii*

Hence we attribute to Jewish influence the introduction into Christianity of holy days, the sabbath, and various festivals and fasts as commemorations of events in the history of our Saviour's life and passion,* as well as exaggerated notions concerning baptism and the Lord's supper, tending to regard them as *opera operata*.

To the Oriental Philosophy we especially attribute the introduction of ascetical practices, the beginning of which was fasting. On this point they were also sustained by Jewish prejudices, which had long esteemed fasting to be a part of religion, though as we have shewn (Vol. I. 474, &c.) without the least warrant from the Old Testament. In the first instance the primitive christians probably did not consider fasting to be a matter of religious obligation, but they regarded it under the delusion that still prevails among Protestants on that subject, that it was useful as *a matter of self-discipline*. Not that it was sanctifying in itself, but that it assisted men in attaining to personal holiness; an absurd conceit without the least justification from the New Testament, and indeed manifestly contrary to its spirituality, which Christ and his apostles endeavored to impress on the minds of their disciples, as having nothing to do with meats or drinks or any thing external to the soul.

Fasting however, having obtained a recognition from the primitive christians, was next followed by celibacy, and gradually by all other bodily austerities, until monachism, which consisted in the adoption of every species of ascetism, ultimately came to be regarded as the perfection of a christian life.

* Some thing also must be referred to the perverse ingenuity of religious persons, in proposing to interest the careless and irreligious respecting the importance of christian doctrines or principles, which, as abstract propositions, had little influence on their minds. When religious teachers became aware of the popular indifference, they sought to revive their moral sensibilities on the subject by external exhibitions, which would recall the attention of worldly-minded people to the importance of religious obligations. In this manner we can easily comprehend why the anniversary of Christ's crucifixion should become an early observance. Men were thus reminded that at this particular time of the year Christ had suffered for human salvation, and to prepare them with greater solemnity for the preaching of that day, they were instructed to do all such things as should discipline their minds for the reception of that important truth by meditation, prayer, abstraction from the world, fasting and other similar acts. When the very day arrived and the exposition of the doctrine had been fully urged, the people then were allowed to indulge themselves in a festival, (Easter) which was understood to commemorate the happiness or blessed condition we enjoy in virtue of Christ's death. A few generations however, changed the theory of the whole pageantry into an *opus operatum*.

Other corruptions besides these were also introduced from the influence of the Oriental Philosophy; such as speculations upon the origin of evil,* upon the nature and attributes of the Creator of the universe, the ministry of good and evil angels, all of which, subjects have been distinctly exhibited to us in the preposterous systems advocated by Cerinthus, Basilides, Valentine, &c. which though rejected for the most part by the majority of christians, still shew the nature of the subjects by which the public mind was agitated and diverted from practical godliness to unprofitable speculations.

But though the Oriental Philosophy was not sufficiently conformable to christian views to be adopted in its speculative doctrines, it was different with that of the Greeks. Origen, Clement of Alexandria, and other eminent christian doctors, openly gave an adhesion to Plato and the expositors of his system; so that the christians of Alexandria became eminent for their philosophy, and through it introduced many of those corruptions into Christianity that were gradually elaborated into a systematic form in the ensuing century.†

As it may be a difficult matter for persons of the present day to comprehend, how the primitive christians could have fallen so early into corruptions so grossly contrary to the New Testament writings, it is important to explain the subject by an exposition respecting the Scripture writings that will solve the principal part of the supposed difficulty.

The teachings of the apostles or of their associates to the primitive christians, in the first instances was altogether oral, which if we consider the extreme simplicity of their doctrines as originally promulgated, there is no difficulty in comprehending they could be retained in all accuracy in the minds of those to whom they were communicated.

* The speculation concerning the origin of evil was also deeply involved with the Greek philosophy, and under the influence of both Greek and Oriental speculators it gradually like a whirlpool drew into its vortex almost every doctrine of Christianity.

† Tertullian (*Apol. chap. 47.*) distinctly recognizes the corruptions introduced into Christianity before his time (A. D. 198,) by the philosophers. "It is no wonder," says he, "if the ingenuity of philosophers perverted the Old Testament, *since men sprung from them* have corrupted even the New Testament by their opinions, so as to support the tenets of their philosophy; and have cut many oblique and intricate paths from the one only way. I mention this that the well known variety among professors of our religion may not furnish another point of resemblance between ourselves, (the christians,) and the philosophers," &c. Hagenbach (*Hist. Doct. i. 16.*) considers that systematic theology, *i. e.* philosophical theology began with Origen.

It was only gradually that the apostles began to write on the subject; Matthew in about thirty years after our Saviour's crucifixion* wrote his gospel in the Hebrew dialect of that time, and which was sent to, or deposited with some particular community. It was however, but a single copy which could only be made known to christians in Judea by the slow process of multiplying manuscripts, and which required to be further translated into Greek or Latin to be understood in other regions of the Roman Empire. Hence many years necessarily elapsed before this gospel could have been generally known among the various christian societies. The gospel of Mark and Luke made their first appearance also about thirty years after Christ's ascension, at other places where Christianity was established, and could only be extended among believers by the same laborious process of copying manuscripts by the hand. John's gospel, which made known so many important statements connected with Christ's personal teaching, was not written until about sixty-five years after the crucifixion, and was in like manner to be copied by numerous hands before it could reach the great body of professing christians.

The epistles of Paul and other apostles were written to particular congregations or individuals at various intervals of time, or if of universal address, were at any rate first published in a single copy at some particular place, from whence they were gradually extended by manuscript copies throughout Christendom.

The New Testament writings therefore, were slowly multiplied and extended among christian believers, not only from the tedious process of copying by hand, but it further required a considerable time for men to know where apostolic writings were preserved; for the intercommunication of christians throughout the Roman Empire was infrequent and irregular, as there was no assembling of believers together at any one place at stated periods. A considerable time therefore, must have elapsed before it was possible that christians at large could obtain the New Testament such as it is in our day. Probably a century would be the least time, as a general computation, though particular communities, such as those in the larger cities of the Empire, no doubt had obtained them sooner.

During all this time, however, Christianity was constantly preached, and vast numbers of converts made, essentially by oral

* The ordinary opinion that Matthew wrote his gospel about five years after our Saviour's ascension, has been completely disproved by Michælis, Lardner, &c. who agree that it could not have been written earlier than A. D. 60 to 63.

teaching, which as we have already stated was very easily accomplished before metaphysics or theology had corrupted the simple requirements inculcated by Christ or the apostles.

When individual christians therefore, first began to speculate and suggest philosophical views on the fundamental principles of their belief, as not possessing the entire volume of the New Testament, they were often unaware of various passages that would have been sufficient in our view, to have prevented many of those false and extravagant notions that prevailed in these early times. Nor must we omit to state that in addition to their but partial acquaintance with the New Testament writings, the public mind was also misled to a considerable degree by false or puerile books published by injudicious or unprincipled persons, which required no little exertion on the part of intellectual christians to ultimately reject as being prejudicial. See our observations on this subject, Appendix, Art. No. 4.

Much of the misjudgment therefore, of the primitive christians becomes intelligible to us by this view of things, which it would be very difficult to otherwise comprehend if we were to consider they possessed the New Testament in its present completeness.

But after all, the corruption of Christianity in any of the particulars we have enumerated was inexcusable. The primitive christians ought to have discerned that what the apostles had expressly taught was all that was required from them. Men recognized by them as having been inspired of Jehovah had made plain communications to them, and the inference ought to have been that nothing else was essential. Had any thing further been required from human faith or obedience, then certainly it might have been presumed that the apostles would have given them a confession of faith, and an ecclesiastical discipline as being essential to the further elaboration of christian principles. But without further general views on the subject of the early corruption of Christianity we will now descend to some particulars.

The most remarkable circumstance in the corruption of Christianity presented to us about the middle of the third century, was the recognition of the ministers of the gospel as a corporation of priests, who it was believed had been constituted by Christ to exercise functions in the christian church, analogous to those performed by the Aaronical priesthood among the Jewish people. As this doctrine has had a most enduring influence upon Christendom, it will require a careful investigation into the transactions of these nearly unrecorded times, in order to estimate the operation of

causes by which such a doctrine became incorporated into the simplicity of the christian faith.

How this most wonderful innovation was accomplished I apprehend there will be no very great difficulty in convincing any unprejudiced reader, who duly estimates the actual conditions of christian society as we have already shewn it to have existed during the times that preceded the third century, for a few important facts or statements which history has preserved on this subject, throw a satisfactory light upon the progressive steps by which clerical aggrandizement was effected.

Before commencing to explain the origin of ecclesiastical usurpation, we must remind our readers of the results of our investigation concerning the constitution of the christian church, where I trust it was sufficiently proved that neither Christ nor the apostles ever contemplated the establishment of any ecclesiastical body or corporation distinct from the laity; and hence as no such institution was appointed by Christ, so our present undertaking will be confined to shewing, that the clergy originally were those persons who as elders or bishops, deacons and deaconesses, superintended the general concerns of the first christian assemblies, whether temporal or spiritual, but who had no pretensions to any higher functions than those exercised by persons who now direct the members of a class, or a lay prayer meeting.

We have already shewn, Vol. II. 180, &c. how christian assemblies or congregations were originally organized under the direction of the apostles, or of other persons who devoted themselves to preaching the gospel. In the congregations thus formed, it was expedient that certain persons should be regarded as leaders or directors, who from their superior capacity, christian knowledge, or piety, were more especially qualified to counsel or instruct the ordinary class of believers on all subjects interesting to them whether in a spiritual or temporal point of view. All christians it is true were brethren, and were to regulate their action towards each other by the principle of mutual love and forbearance; but as all men are not equally judicious and intelligent, nothing could be more beneficial to the congregation at large, than that the most judicious and intelligent among them, should be to a certain degree recognized as such in a community, where the principle of brotherly love was the only regulating principle.

It was under this consideration therefore, that the apostles appointed or recognized certain individuals as the superintendents of particular christian societies, and under the influence of usages

that had prevailed in the Jewish synagogues for centuries previously, they made known this recognition to the congregation by placing their hands on the heads of those persons, whom they wished should be regarded in such a light. Imposition of hands as we have shown (Vol. I. 501, &c.) was originally a civil practice wholly unconnected with any ecclesiastical institution among the Jews, and therefore we have no right whatever to suppose the apostles regarded it otherwise than as previously observed by the Jews, though it may be very reasonably presumed that whenever they performed the ceremony, that they accompanied it with an ejaculatory prayer to the Almighty, that he would assist such persons to fulfil whatever duty or service might be committed to their charge.

After the decease of the apostles, or of those influential persons who had established any christian congregation, as there were no others among them of that personal consideration to whom they would defer in the future appointment of elders or other official members of the congregation, the selection of such persons necessarily fell into the hands of the whole membership, who elected those they considered to be most worthy, in some manner or other more or less formal. The individuals thus chosen, were in the next place received into the body of official members by an imposition of the hands of the existing elders, as the expression of the public recognition of the new member, a practice deduced from synagogue usages as we have already shewn.

As the forms and institutions of christian congregations became more definite and familiar in their peculiarities, the words and terms employed by them concerning their organization gradually became more technical in their significance, and other words in consequence were gradually found to be necessary as implying this new relation. Of these new terms the most important was the word *clergy*, which in the first instance merely denoted those members of the congregation who had some official position, in contradistinction to those who had none.

This word was very innocently brought into use as a mere convenient abstraction. It properly signified *allotment, portion, or inheritance*, and was applied to persons holding an official position in the congregation, as being those who in devoting themselves to such functions might be called either the Lord's peculiar lot, or portion among the membership, or else that they themselves regarded the Lord as their portion or inheritance. It was a mere convenient term which originated in the necessity of some precision in desig-

nating those various individuals who held or exercised an official position in the congregation, as contrasted with the general membership.

But besides the mere necessity of a convenient abstract term to designate those who held an official position in christian congregations, these persons were entitled to an honorable and affectionate consideration from the more ordinary membership, in the circumstance that they were especially exposed to the persecution of the heathen as being the functionaries of the christian body. It required a considerable degree of moral resolution at these early times to take such positions, and which as the more timid or irresolute shrank from, so those who did undertake them were justly held in greater reverence.

The inferior officers of the church were as much exposed as the more prominent to such persecution, as is evident from both ecclesiastical and profane history, which repeatedly mentions the sufferings of the deaconesses, or widows, who were subjected to various indignities and tortures by the heathens, under the belief that they could extort the confession of concealed iniquities from female weakness, which they had not been able to obtain from the fortitude of the male sex.

How very general the term clergy was applied in the first three centuries we have already intimated in a preceding page, and as the fact is perfectly well known a few words only on the subject are necessary. Bingham (*Antiq. Christ. Church, lib. i. chap. 5*) admits that *sub-deacons, acolythists, and readers*, were termed clergy by Cyprian and others of his day. The Council of Nice (A. D. 325) in the nineteenth canon reckons *deaconesses* among the clergy. And the third Council of Carthage (A. D. 397) enacted in the twenty-first canon, that the *readers, leaders of the singers, (psalmistæ,) and the door keepers*, may retain the name of clergy. St. Jerome (A. D. 378) expressly applies the term clergy to the *fossores* or grave-diggers.

In process of time the term clergy gradually became more restricted in its application. Its very etymology, "*the lot or portion of God*," however innocently assumed in its origin, tended to confer a consecrated character upon the official functionaries of the congregation. But, by after legislation the term was gradually restricted in its application, so as to comprehend such persons only as would justify a comparison between them and the orders of the Jewish priesthood. But before we can shew how this important innovation was accomplished, which entirely changed the character

of the christian church, it will be necessary to trace the progress of other circumstances that facilitated such a result.

Though the elders, leaders, bishops, or whatever they may be called, had no clerical commission from the apostles to exercise any rule, or to teach others with authority, yet they necessarily possessed, indirectly, considerable influence among their respective congregations in virtue of their position. They were not only christians of some eminence as to their piety and intelligence, but they were in the first instances more familiar with the apostles or their immediate associates than the general body of believers, and as such it was a reasonable inference that they knew more of the mind and doctrines of the apostles than other persons. Hence they would necessarily be regarded with greater respect than the more ordinary class of believers.

The influence they thus possessed as elders was of still greater weight from the fact, that the New Testament writings were but slowly extended during at least one hundred years after Christ, and hence in the earlier controversies among christians, such elders as had associated with apostles could speak with an authority concerning christian institutions and doctrines, that others could not so explicitly gainsay, and which those who heard them would be inclined to receive with greater deference, as coming from persons who had possessed superior opportunities of knowing the truth.

The next generation of christians were placed in a similar condition; the New Testament writings were still circumscribed as to any universal extension, controversies and distractions had increased, and the elders who had enjoyed personal communication with the apostles and their more immediate associates had now deceased. The soundness of christian doctrine was therefore apparently more dependent than ever upon the then living elders, who could at least say that they had been instructed by those who had conversed with apostles. And as with every generation the speculations multiplied that men had already began to introduce into Christianity, the mass of believers were less competent to determine the value of conflicting expositions of doctrine. The authority of the elders was therefore continually increasing through the partizan feelings of the majority of the community, who more especially looked upon them as the champions of orthodox opinions, and which as opposed by other persons, was regarded in these last to proceed from a desire to introduce some improper innovation concerning the principles of the christian faith. Regarding their elders therefore in such a light as this, it is easy to see that an injudicious community,

more or less led away by their prejudices on subjects of controversy, would exalt them in their peculiar position beyond reasonable propriety.

From such a commencement the aggrandizement of the elders became sensible and progressive, however much it may have been resisted by individuals; and as the subject is of the greatest importance, we will endeavor to exhibit its general progress as accurately as we can infer it from the glimpses occasionally afforded by ancient ecclesiastical history.

The first christian assemblies, as we have already shewn, p. 254, met only for purposes of mutual exhortation and edification. But the exhortations used at such times were necessarily connected with a greater or less amount of exposition of the principles of christian doctrine and practice. This was not only essential to confirm the faith of the more established christians, but was still more important to new converts from Judaism or Heathenism, who during the first three centuries were continually brought into the church, and who as continually required instruction concerning the essential principles of the christian faith, however simple they were, and however easy to be understood.

In process of time this simple exhortation and teaching became involved with the speculations and practices that Jews, Orientals, or Greeks, brought with them into their christian profession, and which gradually gave rise to interminable controversies. Any member of the congregation who imagined himself qualified to exhort or expound, considered he had a right to do so, for the doctrine was broadly laid down by the apostles, that every one was bound to exercise his particular gift to the common edification. Furthermore, they believed at this time that a promise of the Holy Spirit had been made to all those who would seek after wisdom, which they unfortunately misapplied so as to extend it to matters of mere speculation, instead of that wisdom that pertains only towards accomplishing personal perfection in the sight of God.

In consequence of these misapplications concerning gifts and the assumed promise of the Holy Spirit, I apprehend it gradually became very difficult to control any one who imagined himself qualified to advocate particular doctrines or practices; and the natural consequence was, that in the controversies thus excited, the more zealous and eloquent persons, whether judicious or injudicious, intellectual or visionary, gradually became leaders and heads of parties, and as such, divided the congregation into factions who, for the most part being incapable of reasoning for themselves, were

led into various improprieties by those who made the more forcible or apparently convincing expositions respecting any controverted subject.*

Whether these controversies or factions originated between mere individuals of the congregation, or between them and their constituted leaders or elders, it became impossible for the elders to avoid being involved in them sooner or later; and the end of the matter would be that the majority of the elders would be one side, and their antagonists with either a majority or minority of the members would be on the other. Strife and discord being thus set on foot, distraction and confusion became unavoidable.

We have a very distinct view of such a condition of things exhibited to us about the beginning of the second century, in Clement's first Epistle to the Corinthians, which though doubtless interpolated in certain passages at a later day, to suit the views of the clerical body, yet it throws so much light upon the subject of the distractions of christian congregations at this early time, that I shall introduce an analysis of its contents on the present occasion.

The church at Corinth, organized by the apostle Paul, continued in a certain state of prosperity until about the end of the first century, when a state of great confusion arose among them from causes which we cannot now ascertain, but which it is reasonable to presume commenced with the attempt of certain members of the society to introduce some innovation, whether of doctrine or practice, that was resisted by the majority of the leaders or elders of the congregation. But as the majority of the membership were in favor of the innovation, they displaced more or less of the resisting elders, and probably selected others of their own way of thinking.

Under these circumstances, those who adhered to the more ancient condition of things, made an appeal to Clement, then a distinguished presbyter or bishop at Rome, for his influence in their behalf, and he in reply wrote a letter to the church at Corinth, in which with great prudence he abstains from giving any particular opinion as to the merits of the controversy itself, while at the same

* That schisms and distractions among christians had commenced even in the days of the apostles, may be seen distinctly by our note, Vol. II. page 241. A more characteristic exhibition of the subject as shewing that *the teachers* in christian communities were especially censurable in such particulars, is furnished in the third chapter of the Epistle of James, upon which subject we have already made some comment. See Vol. II. 223.

time he decidedly takes the part of those who maintained the old opinions.

In the first place, though he exhorts to peace and mutual forbearance, he plainly shews he considered the disturbance that had arisen among them proceeded from a proud and contentious spirit on the part of certain individuals, not elders, who in pressing their opinions or practices on the church had disregarded all order and propriety. To convince them of the absurdity of such conduct, he illustrates the advantages of order and subordination, *first*, from the constitution of an army of soldiers under the direction of their officers, and *secondly*, by the organization of the Jewish priesthood, where each class of persons fulfilled an appointed function or ministry.

He also terms the disturbance among them a detestable sedition, fomented by a few heady and self-willed men.

He speaks of their emulation, strife, sedition, persecution, disorder, as occasioned by those of no honor having risen up against honorable, wise, and aged men.

He charges them with contention respecting things *that pertain not to salvation*, and exhorts them to put an end to their sedition and strife, to submit themselves unto their *elders*,* and learn subjection and humility.

He tells them how much more just and righteous it is that they should obey God by humility, love, meekness, &c. than follow those who have made themselves ringleaders of a detestable emulation, and that it is no ordinary evil to follow such persons.

He gives them much good christian advice on general matters, which as not being essential to our present discourse we shall pass over.

Among the more important subjects of his letter he makes some observations concerning the ministerial function, which it is material to notice. He states that the apostles, having been sent by Christ

* I subjoin a note to this word because the reader of archbishop Wake's translation, or of an anonymous work entitled "The Apocryphal Gospels," will find in its place the word *priests*, though in both works they have in the foot notes the word *elders*, as if being synonymous. Such a translation however is wholly unjustifiable. The original text, as printed in Cotlerius' Pat. Apostol. is expressly *πρεσβυτεροι, presbyters or elders.*

In the Greek text of Clement, as printed by Cotlerius, the distinction between Jewish priests and Christian ministers is always expressed by suitable words, the first by *ιερει*, the later by *πρεσβυτεροι*. No one therefore could confound them but by either a voluntary perversion, or by a carelessness which is criminal in a translator.

to preach the gospel, “appointed the first fruits of their conversions to be bishops and ministers over such as should afterwards believe, having first proved them by the spirit.”

He then proceeds to state, that, “the apostles knew by our Lord Jesus Christ that there would be contentions upon account of the ministry, and therefore having a perfect foreknowledge of this, they appointed persons as we have before said, and then gave directions how, when they should die, other chosen and approved men should succeed in their ministry.”

“Wherefore,” says he, “we cannot think that those may be justly thrown out of their ministry, *who were either appointed by them, (i. e. the apostles,) or afterwards chosen by other eminent men with the consent of the whole church, (i. e. congregation,) and who have with all lowliness and innocence ministered to the flock of Christ in peace, without self-interest, and were for a long time commended of all.* For it would be no small sin in us, should we cast off those from their ministry who holily and without blame fulfil the duties of it, &c. But we see how you have put out some who lived reputably among you from the ministry, which by their innocence they had adorned.”

Notwithstanding this Epistle has been tampered with by inserting words that recognize a priesthood, yet it is clear Clement recognized no divine institution of ecclesiastics, but speaks of the elders or ministers of the gospel as connected with a system of things analogous to the statements we have previously made on that subject. For he no where charges the Corinthians with any breach of the institution of Christ, or with having interfered with any ecclesiastical system established by the apostles such as characterizes a clerical body; but with having merely set aside persons who had been approved as elders by those who had been recognized as such by the apostles, or other eminent christians. Furthermore, at the same time that he freely censures the proceeding of the general membership, he never argues that they had no right to act as they had done, but that they had acted disorderly and wrongfully in the present instance.

It is also of importance to remark as throwing light upon the general condition of the christian mind at this time, that Clement charges them with being “contentious, and zealous for things that pertain not to salvation,” &c.

It is evident therefore that the contention that had thus arisen among the Corinthians, was chiefly attributable to the ordinary members of the society as opposed to those holding the position of

leaders or elders among them. And there is every reason to believe a similar state of things was not uncommon in other populous christian societies at this time, for every member having a right to exhort or exercise his gift, real or presumed, we cannot doubt but that great distraction was the consequence in most of the larger societies.

But though as shewn above, the more ordinary brethren were especially censurable for their misconduct and presumption, there can be no doubt that more or less of the elders were implicated in these confusions, and who aggravated the mischief. Hence as soon as the injurious effects of this misconduct and presumption, whether by the members or the elders, was perceived, it became necessary to adopt some mode of restraining them within prescribed bounds, and we have sufficient evidence both direct and circumstantial to enable us to infer how this was accomplished.

The distractions occasioned in the church by any of the members exercising the privilege of speaking or exhorting, by which were introduced peculiar and perhaps often absurd notions, had doubtless disgusted not only the more intellectual and judicious portion of such communities by the wrangling and confusion thus excited, but also that large class of simple, devout and practical christians who ever abhor the doubt and uncertainty induced by religious controversies. All such persons, we apprehend, being tired out by the then existing state of things, saw but one mode of remedying its abuses. They must either be distracted by the indiscriminate preaching or exhortation of the unfit, as well as those who were qualified, or they must restrict the privilege to the leaders or elders whom they had selected or approved of, as being suitably endowed with the proper gifts. And in order more effectually to silence the opposition of the ordinary members who were thus excluded, they appear to have commenced with magnifying the office of elders or presbyters as being of apostolic institution, and as such implying a kind of consecrated character. In this matter they were facilitated, not only by giving a technical significance to those passages of the New Testament that recognized such persons in christian congregations, but the way had been prepared for it by the habitual use of the term *clergy*, which originally merely designated persons officially employed in christian congregations, in contradistinction to those who exercised no such functions. This term *clergy*, through usage and prescription having attained to a technical signification, now became favorable to any scheme that tended to exalt the elders or presbyters of the congrega-

gation; for by claiming its etymology to signify that they were "*God's lot or heritage*" in the community, instead of the older sense, that "*God was their portion and inheritance*," they were greatly facilitated in advancing them to be an order separated from the general body of christian believers.

The only embarrassment in the case was, that women, (the deaconesses,) readers, porters, door-keepers, and even the grave-diggers, were also *clergy*. A remedy however for this matter was ultimately found by making the ingenious distinction of *greater and lesser orders of the clergy*, by which means they were enabled to exalt the office of presbyters and deacons as being essentially *the clergy*, and the others merely their subordinate assistants.

The leaders or elders thus sustained as a clergy by the majority of the congregation, in their mutual combination gradually bore down those who advocated doctrines or practices opposed to them, though we presume there must have been no little resistance to the assumption, that any authority of elders was justly inferrible from what the apostles had written on the subject; and as the New Testament writings became more widely extended, they were enabled to oppose them in a greater or less degree against such an usurpation on christian membership.

Such a proceeding, consequently, would excite the elders and their adherents to a more thorough vindication of the new position assigned them in the church, and this was not only done by overstraining the bearing of any passage in the New-Testament that might seem to warrant such construction, but they also resorted to analogies, and the application of practices or principles recognized in the Old Testament, which though only pertaining to that economy, were asserted to be typical or prophetical of the New Testament Dispensation. This gradually led to a comparison of the leaders or elders of Christianity with the Aaronical priesthood, and under the loose mode in which such comparisons were applied in those days, they ultimately arrived at the conclusion, that the elders or clergy of Christianity were intended to succeed the priests and levites of the Jewish Economy, and the application of Ezekiel's prophecy to such an object (*Ezekiel xl. 45; xliv. 30; xlv. 4; xlvi. 10, 11*) left no room for doubt with all who were willing to adopt such a doctrine.*

* That the elders or teachers in christian congregations, about the end of the second century, had begun to consider themselves as *God's lot or portion* in the church, as well as to assimilate themselves to the Jewish priesthood, see *Geister Text Book Eccles. Hist.* i. 102; *Mosheim, Eccles. Hist. Second Century*, part ii. chap. 2; *Mosheim, Comment. Affairs Christ.* &c. i. 111.

But though the elders or leaders thus attained to considerable authority in the several congregations to which they belonged, yet their true position according to the theory upon which christian congregations had been originally constructed, must also have been perfectly well understood by those who were instructed in the New Testament writings, or with the history of the times that had followed them. Thus Tertullian who flourished about A. D. 200 remarks, (*Neander Church Hist.* 112:) "As far as the thing itself is concerned, *the laity have the right to administer the sacraments, and to teach in the churches.* The word of God and the sacraments were communicated by God's grace to all christians, and may therefore be communicated by all christians as instruments of God's grace. But the inquiry is here not merely what is lawful in general, but also what is convenient (*i. e.* expedient) under existing circumstances. We must here apply the declaration of St. Paul, 'all things which are lawful are not convenient.' *With a view therefore to the maintenance of that order which is necessary in the church,* the laity should make use of their priestly rights as to the administration of the sacraments, only where time and circumstances require it."

Tertullian has also said, (*Goode's Divine Rule, &c.* ii. 39, 40:) "*The authority of the church has appointed the difference between the order, (i. e. of ecclesiastics) and the people, and the dignity is sacred where there is an assembly of the order; so where there is no assembly of the ecclesiastical order, you both offer, (i. e. administer the eucharist) and baptize, and are alone a priest to yourself.* Moreover, where there are three, there is a church *although they be laymen,*" &c.

Hilary, the Deacon, is also very express on this subject. His remarks made about A. D. 380, I have translated from the foot note given by Geisler, *Text Book Eccles. Hist.* i. 58.

"At first," says Hilary, "all (christians) taught, and all baptized, without regard to days or particular seasons, as was the case with Philip and the eunuch, who baptized him without any preparatory fasting. And that the body of christians might be enlarged, in the beginning it was permitted to all (christians) to proclaim the gospel, to baptize, and expound the Scriptures in the church. But after Christianity had become generally established, churches organized, and ministers, (*rectores*) and other functionaries appointed, it was forbidden that any one should assume an ecclesiastical office unless ordained to it. The church thus began to be regulated by a different order and superintendence of things, lest its offices as being

performed by any one without distinction should be esteemed insignificant or unimportant. From this cause it is, that now-a-days the deacons do not preach, nor do clergy or laymen baptize but on certain appointed days, unless in case of sickness. Hence it is, the practice of the church at the present time does not conform in all things to the institutions of the apostles as originally promulgated in the Scriptures."

In like manner as with the sacraments, so also even into the third century the laity still continued to partially exercise their privilege of preaching or exhorting the people. The following extract from Neander, (*Church History*, 113,) shews this very clearly. "When about the middle of the third century, *two bishops* in Palestine had no scruple in allowing Origen to expound the Scripture before their congregations *although he had received no ordination*, and Dionysius of Alexandria, a bishop of hierarchical principles reproved them for it, they defended themselves by alleging that many of the eastern bishops *required the laity who were capable of it to preach*. Even in the spurious Apostolic Constitutions, otherwise a very hierachal work, which consists of multifarious elements gradually collected together, there is an order under the name of St. Paul to this effect: *If any man, even a layman, be skilled in the expounding of doctrines, and of reputable life, let him teach, for all must be taught of God.**

In carrying out the idea, mentioned in the preceding page, which suggested the succession of the christian ministry to the Jewish priesthood, the deacons necessarily participated in the augmented dignity of the clerical body, for as the apostle Paul had spoken of them in conjunction with the elders, and of being in like manner ordained, the one could not be elevated in their office without also exalting the other. It was furthermore indispensable to do this as it completed the analogy to the Mosaic priesthood by assimilating the deacons to the levites. The only incongruity opposed to the scheme was the existence of the deaconesses or widows, to which there was nothing analogous in the Jewish priesthood. This anomaly they gradually got rid of by denying ecclesiastical ordination to the deaconesses, as we have shewn at page 213, and thus they obtained the desired analogy by regarding presbyters as being priests, and the deacons as corresponding to levites.

* That laymen did still occasionally teach as late as A. D. 398 is evident from the ninety-eighth canon of the fourth Council of Carthage, which says, "A layman ought not to teach in the presence of priests unless they command (or permit) him."—*Du Pin Eccles. Hist.*

About the same time that the elders and deacons were gradually attaining to a priestly character, as the successors of the Aaronical priesthood, another very important innovation was introduced among the primitive christians in the institution of the office of bishops, under a new and technical application of that term.

The appointment of bishops as superiors to presbyters or elders, arose from the disturbances excited by ambitious or contentious elders, in attempting to form parties for themselves in the congregations to which they belonged. To remedy this evil the christian world adopted the plan of selecting some one of the elders, and making him the superintendent of the whole body of elders in the congregation, with power to control them so far that a harmony of ministerial action might be established in their general proceedings. This statement is so expressly made by Jerome, that we introduce an extract from his writings as fully explaining the circumstances under which this innovation on christian simplicity originated.

Jerome in his commentary on *Titus* i. 5, remarks among other matters as follows: "A presbyter and a bishop are the same (*i. e.* as to order) and before dissensions had arisen in religious matters from the instigation of the devil, and (*before*) it was said among the people, I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, and I am of Peter, then churches (congregations) were governed by the common advice of their elders. But when each of these (elders) began to regard the individuals he had baptized to belong to himself rather than to Christ, it was then decreed throughout all the world, that one person selected from the elders should be appointed supervisor (*i. e.* bishop) over the others, who should have the entire charge of the church, (congregation) and thus the seeds of schism be taken away."*

* Jerome vindicates the statement of our text by the following arguments which I have translated from the note to *Faber's Ancient Valenses and Albigenses*, page 557. "Some one perhaps may suppose," says Jerome, "this opinion that the bishop and presbyter are the same is not from Scripture authority, but merely our private opinion, &c. but let him read over again the words of the apostle to the Philippians. 'Paul and Timothy the servants of Jesus Christ to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, together with the *bishops* and *deacons*; grace be unto you, and peace.' Now Philippi is a single city of Macedonia, and certainly there could not have been in one city *several bishops* such as we now regard them. But because these bishops in that time were also called presbyters, it was indifferent whether he called them bishops or presbyters. In the Acts of the Apostles it is also written that when the apostle arrived at Miletus, he sent to Ephesus for the *presbyters* of that church, and among other things said to them, he remarks. 'Take heed to yourselves, and the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made you *bishops*,' &c. Therefore as the presbyters know themselves by the custom of the church to be subject to him (*i. e.* the bishop) that is put over them, so let the bishops know that

It is in a distinct comprehension of the fact of the almost universal distraction and confusion among professing christians as occasioned by presumptuous members, or by ambitious elders, that we perceive the import of Jerome's phrase, "*it was then decreed throughout all the world.*" This means nothing more than it was every where concluded that the only remedy for the repression of the disorderly and contentious conduct of the elders, was in putting them under the supervision of some person of known judgment and piety; for there never was any direct legislation on the subject by any convention of christians for such a purpose. But as the mischief was every where evident, the remedy seemed so natural to them all that it was every where adopted.

Through the above statement by Jerome we fully comprehend the whole subject of episcopacy, whether as regards its original institution, or the ambiguous ecclesiastical character of the bishops themselves in the third, fourth and fifth centuries, or in the Roman Catholic Church afterwards down to the Reformation. For though the bishops gradually attained to the greatest power and influence, it was simply through their mere position as overruling other presbyters as stated above by Jerome. This is abundantly evident from the circumstance, that the Catholic Church never did recognize them to be a *third order in the ministry*, as was expressly determined by the Council of Trent. See our note Vol. II. 177. This fact strangely overlooked by the Presbyterians, settles their controversy with the Church of England respecting the orders of the ministry.*

The only objection to the preceding remark that deserves refutation, is the ordinary prejudice that Aerius who flourished A. D. 360, was reputed to be a heretic *for having asserted the equality of bishops and presbyters.* But the fallacy of such a construction is sufficiently exposed by Bishop Stillingfleet, (*Irenicum*, 301, &c.) who shews that Aerius was condemned not for that opinion, but for having withdrawn himself and his followers from the commu-

they more *from custom than divine authority*, are superior to the presbyters, and that they ought together to overrule the church."

* To prevent any cavil as to this matter we remark, that in quoting the determination of the Council of Trent, we do so simply on the ground of its being the judgment of the highest ecclesiastical body in the Catholic Church respecting a fact pertaining to their own system and discipline. On such subjects they are certainly unobjectionable witnesses. Hence in determining that bishops were not a *third order in the ministry*, we have the most conclusive evidence that such had been ever the opinion of the Catholic Church. If the Council of Trent were not competent judges of the traditions and doctrines of their own church, who is to judge for them on such particulars

nion of the church. That he was not regarded as a heretic for his sentiments respecting the identity of bishops and presbyters, is evident from the fact recognized by Stillingfleet, from the argument of Medina at the Council of Trent, that Jerome, Augustine, Ambrose, Sedulius, Primasius, Chrysostom, Theodoret and Theophylact, were all of the same opinion as Aerius on that subject.

At what particular time it became necessary to control the presbyters or elders by the appointment of bishops, we have no precise information. It was necessarily, according to our view of the subject, the work of time, and took place earlier in some congregations than in others, for the first bishops were not diocesan bishops, but simply supervisors of single congregations, or at least of a single community in which there may have been two or more congregations. The first instance in which bishops seem to be formally recognized in such capacities is in Ignatius' Epistle to Polycarp, written most probably about A. D. 107. According to the text of Ignatius as given by Mr. Cureton, (*Corpus Ignatianum*,) he evidently speaks of the bishop as the head of the christian community at Smyrna, and that the brotherhood should do nothing without consulting him. I do not recognize however that prominent passage retained in Mr. Cureton's expurgated edition, that extols the authority of the bishop in most inflated terms, because I consider the passage from internal evidence to be an interpolation.* But the passage preceding it, and that to the Ephesians, which speaks of Onesimus as being their bishop, are sufficient in my apprehension to establish the fact that bishops as superintendents over the elders had then been appointed, at least in certain christian communities. That it had then become a universal practice I would by no means affirm: the impulse however had been given, and it gradually prevailed over all Christendom.

That these bishops were not diocesan bishops is clear; Lord King in his enquiry concerning the primitive church, and the arguments of the Presbyterians against the assumption of the church of England on that subject, have sufficiently established that fact.

We have now sufficiently shewn how the clergy gradually obtained pre-eminence over their christian brethren. It had been accomplished upon a theory whose further operation it was impossible to limit, since that very pre-eminence was an innovation upon

* This passage is as follows: "Look to the bishop, that God may also look upon you. I will be instead of the souls of those who are subject to the bishop, and the presbyters, and the deacons; with them may I have a portion near God." (*Corpus Ignatianum*, 223.)

the simple condition of things as recognized by the apostles. There is nothing strange therefore that they should afterwards constantly increase in power and influence, through the concurrence of various causes which we will now briefly lay before the reader.

In the first place, the bishops and presbyters continually increased in importance and authority in the view of the people, as being those persons who essentially determined the amount of penance to be performed by individuals who had been guilty of any breach of christian law or discipline. For as the temper of men after the first century became perverted by their ascetical practices, the merciful character so highly commended by Christ and the apostles (*Math.* vii. 1—5; *Gal.* vi. 1—4,) was directly set at naught, and the harshest judgments made concerning the weakness or infirmities of their erring brethren. The bishops and presbyters therefore, as being the official medium by whom individuals were subjected to church discipline, or who again restored them to christian privileges after they had been sufficiently humbled, thus indirectly obtained great personal consideration, which every day tended more and more to exalt them as ecclesiastical functionaries.

In the second place, the new converts from among the heathens brought with them into the christian church, more or less of that superstitious reverence with which they had previously regarded their heathen priests as men consecrated to the deity they worshipped, and who it was supposed by them enjoyed a direct communication with the gods in virtue of their office.

Thirdly, the gradually increasing practice of restricting the administration of the sacraments exclusively to the elders or leaders of the congregation, as gradually increased their authority. For as the early christians insensibly fell into the belief that the sacraments acted *opere operato*, so there was a continual tendency towards the notion that as such they required to be administered by a divinely consecrated body of ecclesiastics.

A fourth cause in producing a reverence of the clergy among the primitive christians, arose from the continually increasing number of rites and ceremonies that were gradually made essential to the purposes of their religious meetings, and which insensibly changed the object of the assembly from a meeting for purposes of edification and exhortation, into a formal assembly for the express object of worshipping Jehovah by an outward homage of devotional exercises. This act of downright will-worship drew with it the necessary consequence that such a service required the agencies of a consecrated body of men, and the analogies that might be

deduced from the Old Testament to justify the hypothesis of this will-worship, in all probability was a very prominent consideration towards inducing the christians of the third century to regard their bishops and presbyters as being the legitimate successors of the Jewish priesthood.

Another and most efficient cause towards conferring a priestly character upon the elders and deacons of christian congregations, was effected by the gradual abolition of the love feasts. As long as this institution of primitive Christianity lasted, the membership assembled together as brethren, where they partook of a common meal, and then united in a commemoration of the Lord's supper around the table at which they had previously been seated. On such occasions the influence of former usages still prevailed more or less, and persons not of the clerical order used the ancient though restricted privilege of speaking and exhorting, which was no doubt exercised often by injudicious persons not only to the annoyance of the elders, but also of the members themselves. But as long as the institution of the love feasts was observed, it was a restraint on the usurping powers of the clergy, and constituted the grand rallying point of church membership to the whole community. To these love feasts every christian of unblemished life resorted, and in its fellowship was founded the very term of "christian communion." Hence when any member behaved improperly he was rejected from the brotherhood, and consequently could no longer participate with them in the commemoration of the Lord's supper, for it was only celebrated in connection with the love feast.

About the middle of the fourth century, we find many of the prominent bishops and clergy exerting themselves for the suppression of the love feasts, on the charge of the improprieties and misconduct to which they gave rise. That the imputation was partially correct I have no doubt, and the disorders ought to have been remedied, which the bishops and clergy could have done if they had chosen to do so. I apprehend, however, they were less inclined to remedy the abuses, than to avail themselves of their existence in order to suppress the love feast altogether, and in this measure they gradually succeeded.

In the abolition of the love feasts, every matter that had heretofore opposed the priestly assumption of the clergy was removed. Their public services were henceforth rendered in temples or houses dedicated to God or the saints, where they officiated as priests in ornamental vestments before altars upon which the mystical emblems of Christ's body and blood were deposited as "*the*

*unbloody sacrifice,"** while choristers and musicians by their chants and hymns completed, as they supposed, the analogies to the temple of God at Jerusalem.

So far as the sacrament of the Lord's supper was perverted from its ancient institution by the suppression of the love feasts, we have been sufficiently explicit when discoursing on that subject, Vol. II. page 147, &c. We shall not therefore repeat what has been there stated, but it will be important to shew that the authority and power of the clergy were exceedingly increased both in a spiritual and temporal point of view by the abolition of the love feasts.

Not only was there no longer an opportunity for a layman to exhort or instruct the congregation on any point of religious doctrine or institution, but the whole theory of brotherly communion ceased with the suppression of the love feast. Christian communion henceforth only implied a participation in the consecrated elements of the body and blood of the Lord at the church altar, and the authority to determine whether an individual should be permitted to receive this sacrament, was henceforth exclusively exercised by the bishop or clergy of the church. The consequences that ensued from this condition of things augmented the character and power of the clergy enormously, as must be known to every one acquainted with the history of the Catholic Church, or as is implied in the following enumeration.

The simple act of excluding an offender from his membership as a christian brother, ultimately became the formidable act of *excommunication*, whereby the individual was devoted to everlasting condemnation unless he became reconciled to the church, *i. e.* the clergy.

The public acknowledgment of the sin or transgression of the offender, gradually was changed to a private acknowledgment to the bishop or presbyter, and gave rise to the institution of *auricular confession*.

The ceremony by which the penitent was reconciled to the brotherhood and restored to his position in the congregation, gradually became the priestly act of *absolution*, in which the clergy

* The first altars as they are called, were only small wooden tables, which were covered with a white cloth, but after men had become familiarized with the misapplication of the term altar to a table, the clergy began to make altars in their true shape, of wood and stone. In A. D. 509, the Council of Epone, in France, forbade any but stone altars to be consecrated, which Bingham says is the first record he could find of altars in the proper form; for previously they were only tables.

arrogated to themselves the power of forgiving sins on private confession as being an appointed institution of Christ.

Out of the power exercised by the officers of the church to either lessen or remit altogether the penance required of an offender, originated the theory of *indulgences*, which in the first instances merely concerned the remission of canonical penance, but which ultimately were asserted to remit not only the sins of men in the present life, but also those of persons already in purgatory.

Out of the authority by which indulgences in process of time were issued, arose the exercise of the contrary condition of laying kingdoms and nations under an *interdict*, by which a whole people were supposed to be deprived of all means of grace until their prince or ruler should submit to the church.

The entire suppression of the love feasts, however, was very slowly accomplished. It was only in the more prominent cities of the empire, or in the dioceses of influential bishops, that the innovation first prevailed. In the rural districts and provinces they were still observed, though becoming continually of less practical importance through the increasing estimate of the priestly character of the elders and leaders of christian congregations. From time to time they were gradually discontinued in different localities: finally ecclesiastical councils began to legislate upon the subject, and by the concurrent action of these assemblies, as composed entirely of clergymen, the whole institution of the love feast was at last entirely abolished.*

Thus through the combination of the various circumstances which we have enumerated, I apprehend the process is very intelligible by which the ministers of the gospel gradually acquired the character of a divinely commissioned clergy, and ultimately of being also invested with priestly functions.

Nothing however can exhibit in a stronger light the utter perversion of the theory of Christianity than the fact, that about the

* It is not easy to fix on the time at which the clergy began to oppose the love feasts. I should infer it was about the beginning of the third century when the tendency to exalt the clergy to a priesthood had become general, and which manifested itself against the love feast in some places more early than others, according as they favored the assumption of the priestly character.

This opposition however to the love feast was continually increasing, and after the middle of the fourth century, both councils and clergy individually were arrayed against them. Thus we find the Council of Laodicea, (A. D. 361,) third Council of Carthage, (A. D. 397,) St. Ambrose, (A. D. 374,) St. Augustine, (A. D. 398,) and others all censuring and forbidding the practice of holding love feasts in churches, but which as they made no provision for holding them elsewhere, was virtually abolishing them altogether.

middle of the third century the ministers of the gospel, or as then styled, the bishops and presbyters, were universally regarded as being *priests*. The term *priest* had not been used in a single passage of the New Testament in any connection with the office of minister or teacher under the Gospel Dispensation, neither are there any subjects of comparison less similar than the priest under the Mosaic institutions, and the presbyter of the gospel. If the reader will examine Vol. I. 440, where we have exhibited the actual position of the Jewish priesthood under the institutions of Moses, it will be seen that their function was to offer sacrifices, burn incense, and perform certain duties pertaining to the immediate temple. Our christian ministry have no temples to officiate in, no sacrifices to make, and no incense to burn. The Jewish priests were never instructors and teachers of the people. Our christian ministry have alone this duty to perform, for there is no other function committed to their hands by the New Testament. Of those that they have arrogated to themselves as their exclusive right, such as ordination of ministers, baptism of converts, and the administration of the Lord's supper, these were not, either in themselves or in analogous institutions, acts of the Jewish priesthood, but of the synagogue ministers with whose functions the priesthood had no concern. Circumcision, whether of Jewish males or of heathen converts, if analogous to baptism, was performed by persons delegated by the synagogue, and was not performed either by a priest or under their supervision. The paschal supper, upon which our ceremony of the Lord's supper was immediately founded, was a rite performed by the people at large, and with which the priesthood according to the law of Moses had no concern whatever.

At the same time that the innovations were taking place by which the elders of christian congregations were gradually converted into priests, there was another principle developing itself among all christian communities, which not only tended to the establishment of the assumed priestly character of the elders or ministers of the gospel, but which actually confirmed them as such, by bringing all Christendom under the entire control of the clergy as legislators for the whole body of christian believers. This principle, of which we have hitherto taken no notice, was the gradual rise and ultimately full recognition of the doctrine of a **HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH**, to which subject we must now direct the attention of our readers.

Though I have abundantly shewn, in a preceding investigation, that neither Christ nor the apostles ever established any ecclesiastic

tical body as possessing either priestly authority, or functions, yet Christ and the apostles did recognize all true believers in him as constituting a church, who should never cease to exist in the world, or as expressed in the oriental imagery of those times, as a body against whom the gates of Hades, (*i. e.* destruction,) should never prevail. Hence the term church, and church of Christ, in this *abstract sense*, was of constant use among the first christians, so much so indeed that they were often termed *ecclesiastici*, literally *church-men*, *i. e.* elliptically, members of Christ's Church. But this employment of the term church as *an abstraction*, was gradually superseded by the use of the term in a *concrete sense*, and which, as involving most important consequences, we must now proceed to shew how it required this new signification.

I have already shewn, page 263, &c. that the teaching of the primitive christians in the first instance was essentially oral, and by this circumstance have explained the facilities that existed by which they insensibly departed from the simplicity of the scheme of Christianity, as established by Christ or his apostles, through the continual introduction of institutions, rites, observances, and metaphysical subtleties.

The general body of christians in the second and third centuries, were honestly desirous of preserving the true scheme and principles of Christianity, but unfortunately, they regarded the then existing doctrines, institutions and practices of the church as being pure and uncorrupted, when they had been already defiled by preceding corruptions. We can however easily understand that although corrupted themselves, they were greatly scandalized at the grosser innovations on Christianity advocated by Basilides, Valentine, and other early heretics. They could not recognize such persons as being brethren, and therefore would not hold christian communion with them. But as these various schismatics or heretics nevertheless called themselves christians, and were so regarded by the heathens around them, the term CHRISTIAN was no longer a sufficient distinction. To remedy this matter, the more orthodox body gradually assumed the appellation of CATHOLIC CHRISTIANS, *i. e.* as being that body of true believers who were to be found *every where* (universally) adhering to the original truths of Christianity, in contradistinction to the Basilidians, Marcionites, Manichees, &c. who had only a *local existence*, or a *circumscribed number of followers*.

This position however of the Catholic christians to these heretics, who had thus run ahead of the general corruption of Chris-

tianity, brought on warm and bitter controversies between them as to the merits of their respective schemes and doctrines; and though the writings of the heretics have perished, yet it is evident from the works of their opponents that they defended themselves with great vigor, and assailed the Catholics by an appeal to the Scripture writings, as justifying them for what they advocated either in theory, doctrine, or institution. How far they were able to vindicate themselves is another matter, but with which we have no particular concern.

But the Catholics of the second and third centuries, who, as we have intimated above, had already adopted many traditional practices and doctrines which could not be sustained by the direct authority of the Scripture, would not consent to make the Scripture the sole arbiter of disputed points. They contended distinctly that they had been instructed in such particulars either by the apostles, or by men who had learned them from the apostles, and that by such direct teaching they had ever maintained the true principles of christian truth.* In short, they evidently sustained the argument that has been since so largely advocated by the Roman Catholics, that the church existed before the Scripture, which is true in fact as we have already shewn, page 263, &c. that the teaching of Christianity was necessarily oral in the first instance, and that the Scripture writings were but slowly communicated to the world.

But the fallacy of maintaining any thing unsupported by Scripture warranty after these writings had been published ought to have been evident, for allowing that the Catholics taught what had been communicated by a supposed regular tradition, yet as they had no guarantee for its actual correctness,† all disputed matters

* This is the express argument of Tertullian, (*De Prescrip. Heret.*) "because as the apostles would not have taught things different from each other, so neither would apostolic men," (after them,) "have set for things," (i. e. by traditions,) "contrary to the apostles, unless those who learned from the apostles preached a doctrine different from them."

† The worthlessness of tradition was at these very times completely exhibited to the christian world in their controversies about the right time of keeping Easter.

The Asiatic christians observed this festival on the fourteenth day of the month, let it fall upon whatever day of the week it might, and for this practice they referred to *their tradition, that it had been thus appointed by the apostles John and Philip.*

The christians at Rome and in the West kept this feast in such a manner that Easter day should always fall on the Sunday, and for their practice they had *their tradition, that it had been so appointed by the apostles Peter and Paul.*

What then was the value of tradition when such a considerable difference existed between them on this their supposed most important and principal festival so early

ought to have been determined by the New Testament books, when men could consult them. For as these writings were admitted to be undoubted productions of the apostles, they assuredly must be the true expositions of the christian doctrine or practice, as made by the apostles originally.

This argument however the Catholics appear to have set aside by entrenching themselves behind the supposed promise of Christ, that he would establish a church against which the gates of Hades should not prevail, and not only so, but that he had further promised to be with this church to the end of the world. Of this church the Catholics contended they had always been, and were thus consequently preserved from error. These false interpretations of Scripture promises, which we have exposed page 169, &c. seemed overwhelming reasons to the Catholics to adhere to their traditional doctrines and opinions as being the actual teaching of Christ and his apostles; and thus the term **Church of Christ**, which had been previously an abstraction, was superceded by the concrete and technical term **THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH**, which by necessary consequence henceforth comprehended only those peculiar doctrines, notions, institutions and observances, which *the Catholics had adopted*. Those who did not conform to their standard in such particulars, were declared not to be members of that church which Christ had established, and which he had promised to preserve from error and protect until the literal ending of the world. This theory of the church may have been recognized by individuals during the second century, but the full elaboration of it into a doctrine of universal obligation, was not effected, as we shall presently shew until after the middle of the fourth century, from which time it steadily increased in its imperious signification and

as A. D. 165. For at this time Polycarp went to Rome to attempt to compromise a dispute on this subject that had occasioned a very sharp controversy between the different adherents of these *contrary apostolic traditions*, and which at last so excited Victor, bishop of Rome, that he, A. D. 195, renounced all communion with the Asiatic bishops.

If instead of disputing concerning these traditions, one of which must have been necessarily wrong, they had consulted the Scripture, they would have seen that the very theory of setting apart any holy days or times was disallowed by the apostles. See *Gal. iv. 10, 11*; *Colos. ii. 16*, &c.

The worthlessness of traditions may be farther estimated by the numerous differences existing every where among the christians of the fourth century, concerning their rites, ceremonies and institutions, which were all sustained on the principle of being derived from apostolic tradition. *Socrates, Eccles. Hist. lib. v. chap. 22*, and *Sozomen, lib. vii. chap. 19*, give us considerable lists of such matters. The reader may also consult *Daillâ, Right Use of the Fathers, lib. i. chap. 10*, on the subject.

influence, until it attained its consummation in the establishment of the Bishop of Rome as the head of the whole hierachal institutions of Christendom.

It is of the greatest importance that the reader should distinctly comprehend the vast change that was introduced into the christian religion by the insensible process of converting the abstract term *Church of Christ*, into the concrete term *The Holy Catholic Church*; for the oversight of this matter has been the cause of great perplexity to all readers of ecclesiastical history, and especially so to those who have been engaged in controversies with the Roman Catholic Church.

The term *Church of Christ* in the first and second centuries, as we have already observed, was merely *an abstraction* which included all believers in Jesus Christ who honestly endeavored to live according to his requirements. But the term *Holy Catholic Church* became concrete, in consequence of the Catholic christians having as a mere numerical majority assumed that appellation, which they then determined comprehended every thing that had been taught by Christ or the apostles. Through this assumption of a mere majority holding peculiar opinions, the *abstract term Church of Christ* was superceded by that of *Holy Catholic Church* as a concrete, for it henceforth comprehended exclusively that peculiar exposition of doctrines, institutions and practices that were made by the *Catholic clergy* absolute fundamentals of christian belief. If any one therefore did not give an unqualified assent to these requirements of the *CLERGY* of the *Holy Catholic Church*, he was then considered by the Catholics to be out of that scheme of salvation instituted by Jesus Christ.

Nothing however was more fallacious than this assumption on the part of the Catholics, for instead of having adhered to the doctrines or institutions of the apostles, they had previously abandoned the Scripture platform, and had followed the mere opinions and teachings of men, of doctors, and other uninspired individuals, as much as the followers of Basilides, Valentine, &c.* So palpable

* Tertullian, in his treatise *De Corona Milit.* (see *Du Pin Eccles. Writers*) has given us a very clear illustration concerning certain corruptions that had then become recognized by the Catholics, by the enumeration of the following practices, which he acknowledges were only sustained by tradition, *viz.*

Tasting milk and honey after baptism, and not bathing for a week afterwards.

Receiving the sacrament of the Lord's supper at day break, and then only *from the hands of those who preside in the assemblies*.

Offering yearly oblations for the dead, in honor of martyrs.

That it is not lawful *to fast on a Sunday, nor to kneel in prayer on that day*. And

was this, that Tertullian (A. D. 200) expressly denied that controversies with those persons called heretics were to be determined by any reference to the Scriptures. Thus he says, (*De Prescrip. Heret. sec. 19.*) "We must not therefore permit heretics to make their appeal to the Scripture, neither must we admit them to a scriptural disputation, in which the victory is either none, or uncertain, or at least precarious, and very liable to uncertainty." He then undertakes to determine what is christian truth by the traditions that had ever prevailed in the church, and challenges the heretics to shew their catalogues of bishops from the foundation of Christianity, who had transmitted the true faith like those of the Catholic Church.

Tertullian has reiterated in other places of this treatise the same prohibition of the Scripture writings in controversies with heretics. In sec. 15, he says: "The first and chief step therefore which we take against them, is that of not admitting them to any discussion touching the Scriptures."

In sec. 16: "The next reason is, because a discussion of the Scripture can avail nothing, except to lead in some sort to a sheer turning of the stomach or of the brain."

And finally, in the concluding sentence, "I have argued against all heretics in general, that they ought to be forbidden by fixed just and necessary rules to bring Scripture into their disputes."*

that we take great care that no part of the sacramental bread should fall to the ground.

That we often sign ourselves with the sign of the cross.

"If you demand a law for these practices," says Tertullian, "taken from the Scripture, we cannot find one there, but must answer that tradition has established them, custom has authorized them, and faith has made them to be observed."

* As these arguments of Tertullian may appear wholly inexplicable to some of my Protestant readers, I will explain the subject. It was not from any disregard of the Scriptures that Tertullian made use of such reasoning, but his principle was, that the truth as communicated by the apostles had been already fully comprehended by the Catholic Church in all its parts and bearings. Having come to this conclusion, he contended that it was preposterous that every new opinion or interpretation was to be discussed by a reference to the Scriptures, for this would imply that the church had not yet attained to a true knowledge of christian truth. Hence, says Tertullian, disputes as to christian truth would be interminable if men were allowed to bring in new interpretations of the Scripture writings according to their notions on the subject.

As the Catholics could not establish many of their doctrines or observances from Scripture authority, and as it was sometimes difficult to refute the assumptions of some of the heretics by the Scriptures, the shortest as well as the most effectual way for the Catholics, was to assume that the Scriptures were already thoroughly understood by them, and their interpretation henceforth must be only determined by the established tradition of the church.

In like manner with Tertullian, Vincent of Lerins, (A. D. 434,) says, "they (heretics) have the phrases of Scripture continually in their mouth: they quote every part of Scripture; the law, the book of the Kings, the Psalms, the apostles, the gospels; the prophets. They are perpetually citing Scripture, and they clothe all their language in expressions of Scripture, in public and private, in their sermons, and in their books, at their entertainments, and in their walks. Look into the writings of Paul of Samosata, Priscillian, Enomius, Iovinian, &c. you will scarcely see a page which is not larded with passages of Scripture," &c.

"What then," says he, "shall Catholic men do in the interpretation of Scripture. My answer is, that *they are to interpret the divine canon according to the traditions of the universal church, and the determinations of Catholic doctrine*; in which catholic and apostolic church they must by all means have universality, antiquity, consent."* See *Lardner, Credibil. Gospel*, v. 223, 25.

These very-significant quotations are sufficient to shew that the Catholic christians, so far from having preserved the truth as inculcated in the New Testament by the authority of Christ or the apostles, were just as much influenced by the opinions and teachings of men as any of those presumptuous persons they called heretics. Indeed the teaching of the Catholic Church after the third century was altogether based upon tradition. It never rested on the interpretation of the Scripture, but on the doctrines and opinions advocated by the earlier fathers. Thus, for instance, the bishops at the Council of Ariminum, (A. D. 359,) in their letter to the Emperor, make use of the following language: "We pray you to preserve *the traditions which we received from our ancestors, who*

* This Vincent of Lerins, who is of the greatest authority with the Catholics and the Oxford tract divinity school, was the most ingenious theologian, for the purposes of an innovating clergy, that I have ever met with. He first claimed the authority of antiquity in favor of whatever was advocated by the church, and then most ingeniously laid down the principle that the purport of these ancient traditions *was more clearly comprehended by modern ecclesiastics*.

Thus Bossuet remarks in his *Defense de Trad. et des Peres* i. 407, against Father Simon, who had asserted certain matters of an earlier antiquity than the church was willing to admit; "antiquity is to be preferred, it is the rule of Vincent de Lerins. He (Simon) ought to have added, that according to the same Doctor, (Vincent) *posterity often speaks more clearly.*"

"We must not forget," says Bossuet, (*Defense*, &c. ii. 209,) "that Vincent de Lerins has pushed the subject so far as to say, tradition passes from **AN OBSCURE STATE, to one more luminous**, so that it receives *with time, a clearness, a precision, a justness, an exactitude, WHICH IT WANTED AT FIRST.*"

On such premises as these, traditions may be expounded to prove any thing which ecclesiastics of later time may think fit to assert on the subject.

were all wise and prudent, and who we have reason to believe were led by the Spirit of God. For these innovations not only lead believers to infidelity, but also delude unbelievers."

St. Pacian also, in his letter to Sempronius the Novatian, A. D. 380, (*Du Pin Eccles. Hist. 4th Cent.*) says, "why should not we" (*i. e.* the Catholics) "have a respect to the authority of those apostolic men," (the fathers of the church.) "Shall we pay no deference to the testimony of St. Cyprian? Would we teach this doctor? Are we wiser than he," &c.

St. Athanasius, in his first oration against the Arians, about A. D. 358, says, in explicit terms, "that the expressing of a person's sentiments in the words of Scripture was no sufficient proof of orthodoxy, because the devil himself used Scripture words to cover his wicked designs upon our Saviour, and that heretics were not to be received though they made use of the very expressions of orthodoxy (Scripture) itself."—*Jones' Hist. Christ. Church*, 177.

Though the abstract term Church of Christ had become changed into the concrete term Holy Catholic Church even during the second century, yet it was merely held so in the light of a bond of union among Catholics, though continually increasing in its technical importance. It was not, however, introduced into any creed as an article of faith, until after the year A. D. 381, when it made its first appearance under the sanction of the Council of Constantinople, who then perfected the Nicene creed. We can more distinctly appreciate the correctness of this view, in the fact, that in the year preceding, or A. D. 380, (*Milman's Hist. Christ. chap. ix.*) the Emperors Gratian, Valentinian 2d, and Theodosius, issued a decree, in which among other determinations they announced: "We will that those who embrace this creed," (*i. e.* the Nicene,) "be called Catholic Christians, we brand all the senseless followers of other religions by the infamous name of heretics, and forbid their conventicles to assume the name of churches. We reserve their punishment to the vengeance of heaven, and to such measures as divine inspiration shall dictate to us."

After such an edict as this, we can easily comprehend why the Council of Constantinople should on the ensuing year introduce a belief in the HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH,* as an article of faith into

*In examining the ancient creeds as collected by Bingham, (*Antiq. Christ. Church lib. x chap. 4.*) I see none in which "the Holy Catholic Church is made an article of faith before the time of the Council of Constantinople, A. D. 381. Hilary, Epiphanius, Cyril and others, who flourished about A. D. 350, recognized the doctrine as individuals; but it was not insisted upon as a matter of faith until after the Council of Constantinople, as above stated.

the creed; from which time it has prevailed ever since. The year after, (A. D. 382,) the Emperor Theodosius issued his famous edict against the Manichees and other heretics, by which for the first time in the history of Christianity, *heresy*; *i. e.* a difference from the HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH, was made punishable *with death*. I presume therefore that my language is not too strong, when I state that the foundations of the HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH were laid in blood.

The intelligent reader can easily comprehend the extensive consequences that flowed from the continual expansion of this doctrine of a Holy Catholic Church. As a principle it cohered admirably with the notion of the priestly character of the ministers of the Gospel, and of the efficacy of the sacraments administered by them as conferring grace *opere operato*. In the analogies that were every day discovered between such principles and the institutions of the old Jewish covenant, the doctrine of a Holy Catholic Church every day became more irresistible. Nothing but time was wanting to familiarize the human mind to such a theory, and to elaborate the whole subject into the harmony of a system, which though entirely contrary to the whole scope and bearing of the New Testament writings, yet through the concrete sense attached to the term Church, and the false interpretation of the Greek word *αιώνιος*, (see Vol. II, page 171, &c.) to signify *end of the world*, instead of *end of the Age*, the assumption of the Catholics became so identified with the apparent teaching of the Scripture, that it would have been deemed as impious to doubt of the divine institution of the church, as of the Scriptures themselves.

The more immediate consequence of the establishment of the doctrine of a Holy Catholic Church in the concrete sense, was, that the whole legislation for christian communities henceforth fell into the hands of the clergy, who as being the recognized exponents of the church, thus virtually became the church exclusively. For the clergy assembled in Provincial Councils there determined authoritatively what doctrines, institutions and practices were to be observed in their respective provinces as the true teaching of the Holy Catholic Church, and though there was at first contradictory and anomalous legislation on certain matters, yet by the continual enactment of new canons all Christendom was gradually and systematically brought under ecclesiastical subjection.

The powers of these ecclesiastical councils were wholly unlimited, for the platform upon which they stood was not as being interpreters of Scripture, but as EXPOUNDERS AND VINDICATORS OF WHAT-

EVER WAS TRADITIONALLY ESTABLISHED IN THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH.

The position thus assumed by the Catholic clergy, consummated the intellectual obliquity induced by the various misjudgments and false reasonings of christians of an earlier age. By such a position they virtually set aside the Scripture as the rule of christian faith, and hence the writings of the apostles became altogether subordinate to the traditional notions and assumptions of the clergy on all subjects of faith, institution, or practice.* It is true they still continued to quote the Scriptures, not as an absolute rule, but merely as confirming traditional doctrines or practices that might be advocated by one party, or as opposing those that were sustained by another party in the church. But their decision was not made according to what was required by the Scripture, but on the fact or notion as to what had been the traditional belief or teaching of the church in preceding times.† This matter was neces-

* Thus was the prediction of Paul (*1 Tim. iv. 3, &c.*) distinctly fulfilled when he charged Timothy "preach the word, be instant (urgent) in season, out of season, &c. *For the time will come, when they (christians) will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts (misjudgments) shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, (i. e. seeking after novelties.) And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and be turned unto fables.*"

The action of the christian world in this particular was precisely what had been previously done by the Jews. Thus, we are informed by the rabbis, (*Southeys Com. Place Book*, 210, which I translate from the Latin,) "Do not think, say they, that the *written law*, (i. e. the Pentateuch,) is the foundation of our religion, for on the contrary, its foundation is the *oral law*, (i. e. its traditional exposition,) for upon the *oral law* Jehovah originally made his covenant with the Israelites, as it is written, *Exod. xxxiv. 27*, 'according to *these words*, have I made a covenant with thee and with Israel.' *These words* are the *oral law*, which is the hidden treasury of the holy and blessed God. For God knew that in future time the Jews should be exiles among the Gentiles, and that these last would translate the Jewish books into their own languages, therefore God was unwilling that the *oral law* should be written out by the Jews, &c. And although in later times on account of the ignorance and neglect of the Jews, the six portions of the Talmud have been published in writing, yet the Gentiles have not been able to translate them, because a prolix commentary is necessary to make them intelligible."

† This circumstance is very explicitly stated in the preface to translation of Catechetical Lectures of Cyril, of Jerusalem, published by the Oxford Tract Association: see pages xvi. xxi. The italics are those of the editor.

"The subject matter of Catholic tradition as preserved in the writings of the Fathers, is not Scripture *interpretation*, or *proof*, but certain *doctrines* professing to be those of the gospel, &c. But where they occur in Scripture, (i. e. the doctrines,) cannot be ascertained from the Fathers, except so far as the accidental course of controversy has brought out their joint witness concerning certain great passages on which they do seem to have had traditional information.

"When then it is enquired what information is given us by the Fathers concerning Scripture, or Catholic doctrine, we reply, that they rather declare doctrine

sarily determined by a majority of the members of the council, in which the vote of an ignorant bigot, or superstitious ecclesiastic, was of as much weight as that of an enlightened man fully instructed in the import of the New Testament writings.

But be this as it may, the primitive christians in the recognition of the doctrine of the Holy Catholic Church effectually departed from the theory of Christianity as promulgated by the apostles. Infatuated with their notion they henceforth governed themselves exclusively by it, and in all their future action by legislating on such a principle, they gradually gave a consistency and harmony to the system of will-worship they were elaborating, that has resulted in that coherence and plausibility which has enabled the Catholic Church, however shattered and broken, to endure to this day.

The primitive christians very early appear to have lost sight entirely of the difference between religion and theology, and gradually made the latter the subject of most importance, being urged probably by that pride of human nature which prompts us to resent the insult of our opinion or arguments being deemed deficient in that amount of proof which we consider ought to be conclusive with the hearers, and being thus resisted, it then becomes a point of honor to compel an opponent to yield to our expositions. In order to do this, it becomes necessary to identify a mere speculative opinion with important doctrinal or practical consequences, for if its speculative character only was regarded it would be but of little importance. But when injurious results are deduced from a speculative doctrine, and a pernicious tendency ascribed to it, no matter how erroneous such a view may be, if the opinion be sustained by a majority, it is henceforth regarded as being hostile to religion itself* and the necessity of holding a correct speculative opinion on the subject is then made of as much vital import-

and say that it is in Scripture, than prove it by Scripture at once, concordantly and in detail; and again, that they rather tell us how we must set about interpreting Scripture, than authoritatively interpret it for us, &c. Still after all, the Fathers are rather led to dwell on Scripture by itself, and on the doctrinal system by itself, as two distinct parallel and substantive sources of divine information, than to blend," &c.

* What an amount of perverse and unjustifiable inferences may be put upon any discourse or writing, was admirably illustrated by Erasmus, who to justify himself against the misrepresentation of his ecclesiastical opponents, wrote an article to shew that by similar inferential modes of reasoning, the Lord's prayer was full of the most unjustifiable heresies.

tance to the world, as the reception of the most undoubted truth of Christianity.

All the mere speculative doctrines of christian theology have been brought into our creeds in this manner. Disputes first originated among intellectual men on speculative subjects, which having been contended for by haughty and uncompromising advocates, the result has been, that the clergy to whom such matters were ultimately referred, have decided peremptorily that one opinion was orthodox, and the other heretical. The consummation of the intellectual triumph of the orthodox party, (*i. e.* the majority,) was, that their doctrine should henceforth be incorporated into the christian creed, and that every one should give an express adhesion to the determined point. This was often required under the most subtle distinctions that sensitive pride could suggest to either enforce implicit submission, or to leave no alternative to their opponents but to be renounced as heretics by those with whom they had previously associated as members of the common faith. That there was no particle of religion in many of the early christian controversies, every one not blinded by theological prejudices may perceive, who will consider the overbearing and haughty temper in which these disputes were determined, and the bitter and uncompromising hatred with which they regarded all those who presumed to differ from them.*

The institution of bishops which we stated to have originated as a remedy for the distractions induced by the contentions of the presbyters among themselves, it is most reasonable to suppose

* In the year 1850, we had an admirable illustration furnished us by the Church of England, as to the spirit in which theological controversies have been ever managed by those possessing ecclesiastical power or influence. Mr. Gorham, a clergyman of that church on being presented to a living in the diocese of Exeter, was refused the necessary induction by the bishop on the ground, that Mr. G. did not believe that infants were regenerated by the administration of the rite of baptism. The bishop was not only sustained in this rejection of Mr. G. by a large body of the English Church, but also by one or two ecclesiastical courts. Ultimately the Queen's council gave a judgment against the bishop, and required him to induct Mr. G. The inflexible prelate I believe refused to act, and the crown winked at the ceremonial being performed by another bishop.

Now what were the religious merits of this controversy: Mr. Gorham fully concurred with the bishop that *infants ought to be baptized*, and consequently administered the rite to all brought to him for that purpose. What then did it signify what Mr. G. believed respecting its operation: for if God does regenerate infants by baptism, he would regenerate those baptized by Mr. G. as well as those baptized by the bishop. The opposition of this overbearing prelate, therefore, had not a particle of religion in it, but was merely the action of an imperious temper that required all persons under his authority to submit to his arbitrary opinions.

answered that purpose for a certain period of time. But, *who are to watch the watchmen?* The ensuing ages of the church gave full proof that no mere institution among men for the remedy of abuses, can ever control the infirmity or perverseness of human nature. The bishops themselves henceforth became the chief agents in christian distractions, for as being persons of great dignity, and often possessing great learning and talents, together with a reputation for sanctity of life according to the estimate of these ascetic times; whatever speculations were advocated by them, whether from their own suggestions or those of other persons, they necessarily exerted the greatest influence upon the minds of those christians to whom their teaching was especially directed. When therefore the doctrines or speculations of one eminent bishop became antagonistic to those of his brethren in general, or to those of some other eminent bishop, it is easy to estimate that a greater amount of confusion unavoidably ensued than had previously occurred from the contentions of mere laymen or presbyters.

The doctrinal opinions or speculations advocated or impugned by contending bishops that henceforth agitated Christendom, soon became unmanageable by provincial councils, for as these assemblies were independent of each other, and composed of bishops either favorable to or opposed to the peculiar speculations that might happen to disturb the church, so their determinations were often conflicting or contradictory, and the consequence was that instead of composing the disturbances thus excited, they only aggravated the mischief. The only remedy for this new embarrassment was the assembling of Oecumenical or General Councils, which as being composed of bishops and doctors from the universal church, it was supposed would be fully qualified, under the presumed assistance of the Holy Spirit, to settle any question whatever pertaining to christian theology. The first assembly of this kind was held at Nice in Bithynia, A. D. 325, under the auspices of the Emperor Constantine the Great, who had recently become a convert to Christianity from Paganism; and as the assembling of this council has had the most important influence upon Christianity ever since, it is of great importance to have correct views on its history and proceeding.

When Constantine first professed his conversion from heathenism, he found his christian subjects distracted by a controversy concerning the inherent nature of our Lord Jesus Christ, and though it is not easy to infer what the real sentiments of the Ante-

Nicene fathers were upon the subject, yet they did not the less bitterly vituperate each other and give rise to great scandals.

The Emperor, in the first instance, endeavored by a letter to induce the champions of this controversy to settle the matter on principles of christian charity, on the ground that their dispute was concerning an incomprehensible subject incapable of resolution by man, and which further did not practically interfere with any christian obligation, which ever was the true exposition.* The Emperor in this letter manifested a greater perception of religious propriety than any ecclesiastic in his dominions, but as no suggestion of reason or charity could control the controversial pride of the bishops and doctors of divinity respecting this dispute, and induce the exercise of a christian temper among them, the Emperor at last issued a summons to the bishops and doctors throughout the Roman Empire to assemble at the city of Nice in Bithynia, that they might determine how the Godhead was constituted. For the Emperor and his advisers assumed under a false application of *Math.* xviii. 20, that if Christ was present wherever two or three persons met together in his name, that the Holy Spirit would especially be present in an assembly of the most eminent bishops and doctors of the Holy Catholic Church; forgetting altogether the enormous presumption under which they were brought together to determine a subject with which they had no concern whatever.

Though the relative condition of Jesus Christ to the Father, had been more or less a matter of speculation among christians for two hundred years before the assembling of the Council of Nice, it had been chiefly confined to metaphysical theologians, while in practice men had generally sought their salvation from Jehovah as their Father, through Jesus Christ as the Messiah, Saviour, or Redeemer.

*The substance of this letter addressed to Alexander and Arius is comprehended in the following extracts: "I understand then that the occasion of your present controversy is to be traced to the following circumstances: that you, Alexander, demanded of the presbyters what opinion they severally maintained concerning a certain passage in the divine law, (*i.e.* the Scriptures) or rather I should say that you asked them something *connected with an unprofitable question*; and then that you, Arius, inconsiderately gave utterance to objections which ought never to have been conceived at all, or if conceived, should have been buried in profound silence, &c.

"Let therefore both the unguarded question, and the inconsiderate answer, receive your mutual forgiveness. For your difference has not arisen on any leading doctrines or precepts of the divine law, nor have you introduced any new dogma respecting the worship of God. *You are in truth of one and the same judgment,*" (*i.e.* as to the practical part of Christianity'); "you may therefore well join in that communion which is the symbol of united fellowship," &c.—*Eusebius, Life Const. lib. ii. chap. 61, &c.; Socrates, lib. i. chap. 7.*

of mankind, without any technical definition concerning his inherent nature. The time however had arrived in the progress of christian corruption, when men having multiplied the inventions of theology and will-worship, it now became requisite to the farther elaboration of their systematic perversion of gospel simplicity, that they should also come to a distinct conclusion on this subject.

The full import of this outrageous proceeding is only to be estimated by a distinct reference to what the Scriptures have communicated to us, as to what Jehovah had condescended to promise christians in the covenant he had made with them through Jesus Christ, and which it is of the utmost importance to exhibit in its true principles at the present time, for of all the presumptions that ecclesiastical antiquity has introduced into Christianity, none have exerted so enduring an influence as the determination made fifteen hundred years ago by the Council of Nice.

The Messiah, as promised throughout the Old Testament writings, had only been proclaimed to mankind in view of the great purposes to be accomplished by him. He was announced in glorious and exalted terms under all the various conditions through which he was to fulfil his appointed office, but nothing was said concerning his personality further than that he should be born of the line of the patriarchs, and ultimately of the family of David. In saying this I do not mean to assert that there are not many very remarkable expressions applied to the Messiah by the prophets, which if carried out in an absolute sense, as deduced from a literal interpretation of their words, are abundantly sufficient to sustain inferential opinions concerning his inherent nature, which it would be difficult to limit as to the exalted sense in which they might be understood. But then our interpretations of such passages are merely inferences, that have no actual bearing upon the fact of his Messiahship or official function, for be the inherent nature of Jesus Christ what it may, yet still under every interpretation he was strictly speaking only the Messiah, so far as it concerned mankind.

It is in this manner that Jesus of Nazareth is every where exhibited in the New Testament. He is represented to have been the Messiah, and that as such he had fulfilled whatever pertained to his office, the prominent facts of which were that he had died for us: that he had ascended to heaven where he ever exists as our mediator, intercessor and high priest before Jehovah: that all persons coming in sincerity to God through him, should have their sins forgiven for Christ's sake: and finally, at the day of judgment as

Jehovah had appointed, that Jesus Christ shall judge mankind and either accept or reject them according to their works.

The exposition of the New Testament is therefore based, not upon the inherent nature of Jesus Christ, but upon the fact of his Messiahship, and so far as concerns our religious obligations is altogether unconnected with it, for as we have already said, it is indubitable that he was the Messiah, let his absolute nature be what it may.

It is also distinctly clear, that the preaching of the apostles was never directed towards any exposition of the inherent nature of our Saviour, for notwithstanding the exalted inferences that may be put upon expressions sometimes employed by them, yet there is no direct or formal exhibition of their views on the subject of his inherent nature throughout the New Testament.

Hence the apostles long after our Saviour's exaltation to heaven, never hesitated to speak of him as *a man*, not with any reference to his actual nature, as the Socinians have absurdly contended, but simply in the view of designating his personality as an individual who had lived and died among them. For the plain import of the apostolic preaching in the use of the term *man*, implies what is expressed by our English term *person*, or *individual*, without any technical significance whatever. Thus Paul, in *Acts* xiii. 38, says, "Be it known unto you through this *man*, (i. e. *person* or *individual*,) is preached unto you forgiveness of sins," &c. See also *Acts* xvii. 31; *1 Tim.* ii. 5.

Although some of my readers may not admit the validity of my former conclusions as to the absolute incomprehensibility of the subject of the inherent nature of the Lord Jesus Christ; (Vols. I. 357, II. 44, &c.) I shall not on the present occasion offer any further argument on that particular, but will simply contend that the principles of Christianity as taught by the New Testament writers, involve no necessity of any hypothesis as to the inherent or absolute nature of our Saviour as a matter of religion, but that our faith ought to be directed only to those particulars involved in his official functions, as being that Messiah whom Jehovah promised should come into the world to accomplish what was essential to human salvation. Since he has accomplished the work required of him, our salvation is only to be attained by coming to God through him in the mode designated by the writers of the New Testament.*

* This was the view entertained by the earlier fathers before they had become vitiated by that ecclesiastical pride that led to the assembling of the Council of

But the christians of the fourth century would not be satisfied with this simple exposition of the functions of the Messiah, which was the only matter that practically concerned them. They determined in the face of Christ's own declaration, "NO ONE KNOWETH WHO THE SON IS BUT THE FATHER," (*Luke* x. 22,) that his absolute nature should be technically defined, and which they most presumptuously undertook to decide upon by their traditional notions and incidental terms and expressions of the New Testament writings.

Every different construction that these terms, or expressions could bear, had been already made, and the widest conclusions had been inferred from them, angry contentions had arisen among the leaders of different opinions, and great distractions among the people, and yet none of them had the sense or the religion to perceive it was impossible that a positive doctrine on this subject could be essential to salvation. If it had been so, it would have been plainly taught either by Christ himself, or his apostles, whereas, on the present occasion the whole christian body was divided in opinion on the subject. Fifteen hundred years have since elapsed, and yet this controversy has not been determined. Those who constitute the majority still contend for the fundamental importance of a metaphysical definition concerning the inherent nature of the Lord Jesus Christ, the nullity of which ought to be evident to them from their own admission that it cannot be explained, but must be received in all its incomprehensibility as a matter of faith. But surely, if the proposed definition must be received as involving an incomprehensible condition of being, is it not more rational to let the subject remain in the incomprehensibility with which it has been left by the apostles?

Now what light was thrown on this subject by the Council of Nice who decreed (*Socrates Eccles. Hist. lib. i. chap. 8*) that Jesus Christ the Son of God, was the only begotten of the Father, that he is of the substance (*ουσιας*) of the Father, God of God, and light of light, true God of true God, begotten, not made, *consubstantial*

Nice. Thus Justin Martyr, (A. D. 140,) in his *Dialogue with Trypho*, sec. 48, makes the following observations. "But since it has been fully proved that he" (Jesus of Nazareth) "is the Christ of God, whosoever he be, if I shall not be able to prove that he did *pre-exist*, &c. it will be more reasonable only to say that I was mistaken in this point; but not to deny that he is the Christ, though he should seem to you to be made man of man, and nothing more could be proved than that he was made Christ by election. For there are some of our profession, (*i. e.* christians) who acknowledge him to be the Christ, (*i. e.* Messiah,) though they say that he was made man of man, with whom I cannot agree," &c.

(*ομοονοσίον*)* with the Father; when all this unintelligible exposition was followed by the simple practical statement, which no one denied, that he was born into the world and was crucified for us, that he arose again on the third day, ascended into heaven, from whence he shall come again to judge the quick and the dead.

Recognizing the actual functions of our Saviour in his Messiahship, I contend nothing could be more presumptuous and unjustifiable than that the Council of Nice should undertake to determine any thing on the absolute nature of Jesus Christ as being essential to religious faith. It was, and ever has been a presumptuous speculation, whether according to the Trinitarian, Arian, or Socinian hypothesis, as we have remarked Vol. II. 44, &c. and just so far prejudicial, as it has been made a matter of religious obligation to take sides on the question. The New Testament doctrine is most clear, that whosoever comes to God through Jesus Christ in his official capacity as Messiah or Mediator, shall be accepted by him. This is the revelation of Jehovah, and he assuredly will not alter his scheme and purposes towards mankind, whatever may be the notions of such pitiful creatures as we are, concerning the nature, purposes or extent of his scheme.

* The mere English reader must be informed that the great technical importance of the Nicene creed lies in the strength of the Greek term *ομοονοσίον*, which signifies *of the same substance* or essence as the Father. The Arians would only admit that Christ was *ομοιονοσίον*, i. e. of a *like substance* or essence with the Father.

But though the Nicene Fathers were fixed in their determination to establish this creed, it is abundantly evident they had no clear apprehension of the sense of the terms they had employed; for after the members of the council had returned to their several homes, a great commotion was raised among them concerning the sense of the term *ομοονοσίος*. "But while they occupied themselves," says Socrates, (*Eccles. Hist. lib. i. chap. 23.*) "in a too minute (subtle) investigation of its import, the discussion assumed a polemical character, though it seemed *not unlike a combat in the dark*, for neither party appeared to understand distinctly the grounds on which they calumniated one another, &c. In consequence of these misunderstandings, each of them wrote volumes, as if contending against adversaries, and although it was admitted on both sides that the Son of God has a distinct person and existence, and all acknowledged that there is one God in a Trinity of persons, *yet from what cause I am unable to divine, they could not agree among themselves*, and therefore were never at peace."

This difficulty among the Trinitarians respecting their expositions of the doctrine has never since been settled, for even the most celebrated advocates have been assailed by other persons professing the doctrine, as either maintaining Tritheism or Sabellianism. This perplexity on the subject has been well compared by their antagonists to the difficult feat of a man attempting to sit upon the ridge of the roof of a house without inclining either way.

The determination of the Council of Nice entirely destroyed, in its practical operation, the doctrinal simplicity of the christian faith as it had been established by the apostles. From this time, instead of approaching Jehovah as their Father through the mediation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation made them, christians began to pray to the Trinity, an appellation wholly unrecognized in the Scripture, and therefore wholly unjustifiable, since Jehovah had indicated the name as well as the manner by which men were to approach him; specifically as Jehovah, and more graciously condescending as "our Father."

But a still further innovation on christian simplicity was made in undertaking to address prayer directly to the Lord Jesus, which proceeding throws the characteristic construction of the Christian Dispensation into utter confusion, for Jesus Christ most expressly has been announced to mankind as the mediator of a covenant between Jehovah and mankind, and alone the medium of man's communication with his Creator. Hence, even allowing that the doctrine of the Trinity may be abstractedly true as concerns the inherent nature of Jesus Christ, it is still wholly unjustifiable to set aside the office of our Saviour, distinctly announced as a mediator, and undertake to pray to him in his supposed inherent nature. For this there is not only no warrant of Scripture, but the passages are numerous that indicate prayer is to be offered directly to Jehovah, through the mediation of Jesus Christ, as the following texts will sufficiently shew.

Math. vi. 6, 8, 9; vii. 11; x. 20; xviii. 19, 20; *Luke* xi. 13; *John* xv. 16, 26; xvi. 23, 26; xvii. 11, 20; *Acts* i. 4; xii. 5; xv. 4, 8, 12, 14; xxii. 14; xxvi. 22; xxvii. 23—25; *Romans* v. 5; viii. 11, 14, 32; 1 *Corinth.* ii. 10; x. 13; xv. 10; 2 *Corinth.* i. 3, 4, 21, 22; ii. 14; iii. 5; iv. 14; ix. 8; *Ephes.* i. 17; iii. 7, 14; v. 20; *Philip.* ii. 13, 27; iii. 15; iv. 6, 7, 20; *Coloss.* i. 3, 12, 13; iii. 17; iv. 3; 1 *Thess.* i. 2, 3; v. 23; 1 *Tim.* iv. 10; vi. 13, 17; 2 *Tim.* i. 6; *James* i. 5, 17; iv. 6—8; 1 *Peter* i. 3, 5, 17; iv. 11, 14, 19; v. 5—7, 10; 1 *John* iii. 21, 22.

To meet this array of texts, however, it is contended that prayer was made directly to Jesus Christ by Stephen, *Acts* vii. 59; and by Paul, 2 *Cor.* xii. 8, 9, and further, that by our Saviour's own words, *John* v. 23, we are to honor the Son as the Father. Now in opposing the construction put upon these texts, I hope the reader will not consider me as influenced by any theory whatever concerning the inherent nature of our Saviour, but merely as attempting to correct an improper practice, be that nature what it may.

Stephen said he saw Jesus Christ with his natural eyes; Paul had direct communication with Jesus Christ on various occasions, (*Acts xxii. 10, 14, 17—21.*) Under these circumstances it was perfectly reasonable they should address themselves to him personally, yet in doing so, there is no evidence whatever that they regarded him otherwise than as the Messiah, their Mediator, and Redeemer. There is a wide difference however as to those who have not sensible intercourse with Christ; their mode of proceeding should be to act as has been indicated by the apostles everywhere throughout the New Testament; that is, as stated above, they should pray to Jehovah through the mediation of Jesus Christ.

With respect to honoring Christ as the Father is to be honored, the direction is evidently given not as implying formal worship, but that we should honor the Son as we do the Father, by obedience to his requirements.

To insist that honor here implies worship as the Father is to be worshipped, would entirely destroy the characteristic features of the mediatorial scheme, which was the great object of the apostles to proclaim throughout the whole New Testament. It would teach mankind there are two modes by which they can obtain pardon, grace, or blessing; one by praying to Jehovah through the mediation of Jesus Christ, and the other by praying to Jesus Christ individually. Such a doctrine as this entirely sets aside the plan of Jehovah as involved in his express revelation that he will only accept those who come to him through Jesus Christ.*

*That the primitive christians, before the Council of Nice, properly understood this subject is evident from the language of Origen (A. D. 230,) in his treatise upon prayer. (*Oxlee's Letters to Archbishop of Canterbury*, 47.)

"If we duly consider," says Origen, "what prayer really imports, care must be taken not to address it to any thing created, not even to Christ himself, but to the God and Father of the universe only, to whom our Saviour himself prayed, as we have already asserted, and who instructs us to pray in like manner. For on hearing the words 'teach us how to pray,' he does not teach them to pray to himself, but to the Father, saying, *Our Father which art in heaven, &c.* Indeed, if the Son, as is elsewhere demonstrated, be a second as to essence, and subject to the Father, then we must pray either to the Son, and not at all to the Father, or to both, or else to the Father only. Now that which should be addressed to the Son only, and not at all to the Father, every one would be ready to denounce as highly absurd, and totally devoid of all efficacy. But if to both together, then we must address them in the plural number, saying in our prayers 'Grant ye. Be ye beneficent. Do ye supply. Do ye save,' and such like forms, nothing of which can any one shew to have been practiced by any persons in the Scriptures. It is enjoined, therefore, to pray to God alone, the Father of the universe, not, however, without that high priest who was constituted by the Father, with an oath, according to what has been written, 'He hath sworn, and will not repent; thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.'"

Furthermore, what can a man possibly accomplish as a christian by direct prayer to Jesus Christ, that he will not obtain by adhering to the course prescribed in the New Testament, of praying to Jehovah through Jesus Christ, which the New Testament most indubitably teaches will be answered by him. To take any other mode seems to be without excuse, for since men cannot expect to obtain by such presumption the smallest advantage, why should they then, most preposterously, for the sake of a theological speculation, expose themselves to the peril of taking a course that has not the direct sanction of him who alone answers prayer?

Indeed, does not our own consciences, when not excited by the Trinitarian controversy, take this very course? Thus, for instance, in the prayer book of the Episcopal church of the United States, which in this particular does not differ from the practice of all other Protestant churches, I have found that of the prayers and collects in that book employed in the public worship, *thirty-one* only adore the Trinity in formal or implied terms, while *one hundred and twenty-eight* involve no hypothesis on the subject, being simply addressed to Jehovah, through the name, or instrumentality of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now are these latter prayers and collects less effectual at the mercy seat of God, than those which invoke the Trinity? Who can be so presumptuous as to suppose this? Are those prayers that are addressed to the Trinity equally efficacious? Who will dare affirm this? for, where have we a single passage of Scripture which authorizes a formal address to the Trinity? Even allowing the doctrine may be true, it is so as abstracted from all of our devotional exercises; but if it be not true, and fifteen hundred years of prejudice and church authority have not been able to establish that truth?—if it be not true, I ask, in what manner shall men account at the bar of God for their presumption on this subject?

The high relief in which the decision of the Council of Nice, concerning the doctrine of the Trinity, is exhibited in ordinary ecclesiastical histories, and in all controversial works that favor that doctrine, has altogether misled the great body of christians of the present time to believe that before the Council of Nice the Trinitarian hypothesis had ever been the universal doctrine of the primitive church, and that the Arians for the first time broached a new opinion which was an absolute innovation on the original faith.

It would be foreign to my object in writing this work to go into any extensive confutation of this opinion, and shew that the doctrine concerning the Trinity was a subject wholly undetermined among christians before the Council of Nice, and that the Arian hypothesis was fully as ancient as that of the Trinitarians. This fact is abundantly clear to any one who will compare the writings of the Ante-Nicene fathers, as they are called, as quoted by the Arians and Trinitarians to support their respective doctrines, and though heated partizans may contend to the contrary, yet every unprejudiced investigator of the subject will honestly confess, that it is utterly impossible to ascertain what were the actual opinions of the earlier fathers on the subject. This matter is so undeniable, that at the Council of Trent, some of the divines there distinctly acknowledged the fact, which however they explained away on the gratuitous supposition, that as no attempt had been made to subvert the Trinitarian faith before Arius, that the fathers had not been called on to express themselves more clearly.* This sophistical hypothesis has been largely adopted in the Catholic Church to shew why the doctrines of purgatory, worship of saints, transubstantiation, &c. are not to be found in the writings of the earlier fathers; but no rational man ought to be deluded by such a palpable *begging of the question*. The evident truth concerning these doctrines as well as that of the Trinity, is, that they were all innovations on christian simplicity, being unsettled questions until their controversial importance became so great as to require ecclesiastical determination.

* That the opinions of the Ante-Nicene fathers was not universally in favor of the Trinitarian hypothesis, may also be distinctly inferred from the remarkable circumstance, that not only were the christians of the Roman Empire divided and distracted on the subject during the one hundred years that this controversy agitated the Empire, but it is equally certain that all the barbarian nations bordering on the Roman Empire adopted the Arian doctrine. Now in the very nature of things it is clear, that if the majority of the Ante-Nicene fathers and the cotemporary clergy had been fixed in their views concerning the Trinity, it necessarily would have been the prevailing doctrine established by christian missionaries among the heathen nations converted to Christianity. On the contrary, however, it is indisputable that the Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Alani, Suevi, Vandals, Burgundians and Lombards, were all Arians, while not one of the heathen nations around was converted to Trinitarianism but the Franks at a later day, and which was then effected essentially through political considerations offered them by the Church of Rome.

I apprehend there can be no other explanation of this remarkable fact but the one admitted by Mr. Newman, (the celebrated convert to Romanism,) in his *Develop. Christ. Doct.* (chap. viii. sec. 1) "that the language (opinions?) of the Ante-Nicene fathers on the subject of our Lord's divinity, may be far more easily accommodated to the Arian hypothesis, than the language of the Post-Nicene."

The creed established by the Council of Nice, notwithstanding the assumption that their deliberations were influenced by the Holy Spirit, was not left to be accepted by the understanding or consciences of mankind, for the Emperor Constantine undertook to enforce their determination through the exercise of the imperial power. He therefore banished Arius and other ecclesiastics that would not accept the Nicene Creed; he ordered all books written by Arius to be destroyed, and that if any persons should conceal his writings, they should be put to death.—*Socrates, Eccles. Hist. lib. i. chap. 9.*

A time of great theological confusion and perplexity ensued; some of the succeeding emperors embraced Arianism, and in the conflict between the two parties in the church during the twenty-five years that immediately followed the Council of Nice, as many different councils had been assembled, and no less than eighteen creeds had been offered as explanations or substitutes for the Nicene Creed. It was during this time that Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, made his famous lamentation concerning the distraction and confusion that these presumptuous speculations had occasioned in the church.* The little amount of true religion concerned in their elaboration may be estimated from what Gregory, Bishop of Nazianzen, has said on the subject, who flourished about thirty years after the Council of Nice. “If I must say the truth,” says Gregory, (*Jones, Hist. Christ. Church*, 180,) “it is my resolution to avoid all councils of bishops, for I have not seen any good end answered by any synod whatever; for their love of contention and their lust of power are too great even for words to express.”

The Roman Empire was distracted for many years by this presumptuous controversy, but finally the Trinitarian hypothesis completely triumphed at the Imperial Court, as much through the influence of women and eunuchs, as from any other considerations. The Arians having thus lost all credit at the palace, lost their influ-

* “It is a thing,” says Hilary, (*Gibbon, Decl. and Fall, chap. 21.*) “equally deplorable and dangerous that there are as many creeds as opinions among men, as many doctrines as inclinations, and as many sources of blasphemy as there are faults among us, because we make creeds arbitrarily, and explain them as arbitrarily. The *homoousian* is rejected, and received, and explained away, by successive synods. The partial or total resemblance of the Father and of the Son, is a subject of dispute for these unhappy times. Every year, nay every moon, we make new creeds to describe invisible mysteries. We repent of what we have done, we defend those who repent, we anathematize those whom we defended. We condemn either the doctrine of others in ourselves, or our own in that of others, and reciprocally tearing one another in pieces we have been the cause of each other’s ruin.”

ence and respectability with the mass of the Roman people, and gradually ceased to disturb society by their opposition to the prevailing doctrine, though individuals of the most illustrious names as well as of the most undoubted christian piety, have been found ever since to advocate the Arian hypothesis and reject that of the Trinitarians. Of these we can enumerate such men as Locke, Newton, Milton, Samuel Clarke, &c.

Though the Protestant theologians have not been able to see the great corruption of christian doctrine that was accomplished by the Council of Nice, they have very generally come to the conclusion that the conversion of the Emperor Constantine was among the most unhappy events that ever befell the church, for in consequence of the protection of the sovereign being now bestowed on Christianity, a great number of worldly-minded persons professed their conversion to the imperial faith, and thus the church became largely vitiated by the addition of those who brought neither piety nor sincerity with them in their profession.*

A much deeper injury however was inflicted upon Christianity in the conversion of Constantine, from the amalgamation of the temporal power of the Empire with the legislative action of the bishops and clergy. These, as being supposed to be guided by the influences of the Holy Spirit, henceforth determined authoritatively, what mankind were to adopt as the divine appointments of Christianity, while the imperial government undertook to enforce the decrees of councils by civil pains and penalties. Dissenters and recusants were consequently banished or imprisoned, soldiers were employed to eject the bishops of certain cities or provinces, or to sustain others on their episcopal thrones. Hence the court was thronged continually with clerical aspirants for the imperial favor, and all Christendom was disturbed by their worldly spirit.

As the popular religion gradually settled down in the doctrines of the Catholic Church, under the combined influence of ecclesiastical legislation and the compulsory power of the emperor, so it became henceforth a hazardous matter for any one to oppose established doctrines or institutions, whatever the sense of their impropriety might be. Few, therefore, were found willing to incur the imputation of heresy, or to suffer as martyrs from an abstract love

* "In truth," says Eusebius, (*Life of Constan.* lib. iv chap. 54,) "I can myself bear testimony to the grievous evils which prevailed during these times: I mean the violence of rapacious and unprincipled men who preyed on all classes of society alike, and the scandalous hypocrisy of those who crept into the church, and assumed the name and character of christians."

of truth, and consequently, all opposition to matters determined by the church gradually died away. New controversies, it is true, continually sprung up on new subjects, which in their turn were settled by the determination of a council, and were then enforced by the power of the civil arm.

Until the conversion of Constantine, however much Christianity might have been corrupted in doctrine and practice, there was no actual impediment to a recovery from the corruptions, presumptuous doctrines, and institutions that had been gradually introduced into the system. Until that time there was no personal restraint on any one opposing a prevailing error, or in advocating a Scripture truth, and hence as mankind do not wilfully prefer falsehood to truth, so under an honest and unrestricted liberty of discussion, there was nothing to forbid the possibility that truth would ultimately prevail over involuntary error.

But all chances for a reformation of either doctrine, institution, or practice, were cut off, when the imperial power sustained what the councils had decreed. Opposition was silenced, and conformity enforced, unless a change occurred from some modification of the opinions of those who wielded the power of the state on the accession of a new emperor to the throne. Hence the continual intrigues and influence of women and eunuchs upon the reigning sovereign, who, if imbecile, superstitious, or indifferent on the subject, allowed his power to be employed by such persons in sustaining their personal favorites, or those peculiar doctrines which they regarded as being essential to christian truth.

It would be needless to enlarge upon the enormous mischief that was accomplished by this union of the church and state in the times of the Constantinopolitan emperors. Any intelligent man can appreciate the operation of a cause that prevents free discussion by civil penalties. It not only sustains any existing abuse or corruption, but it crushes any effort to correct or reform them.

The union of church and state has had an equally pernicious influence upon the liberties of mankind, for though kings and priests like an ill sorted marriage, have had a continual dissatisfaction in their mutual intercourse, as arising from their contests with each other for superiority, yet they have both understood their interests too well to wish for a divorce. Kings therefore protect the clergy in their establishments, and the clergy preach that it is the appointment of God that the people submit to their kings.

There can be no reasonable doubt that this blending of the imperial power of the Roman empire with Christianity, had been

communicated by the apostle Paul to certain of his converts, as connected with the rise of that anti-christian power in the church of which the earlier christians had received some dark intimations; and hence in the second century they directly prayed for the preservation of the heathen Roman empire, on the express ground that its existence retarded the appearance of anti-christ.

This very remarkable allusion to an event anticipated in the spirit of prophecy, or announced in some unrecorded revelation made to the apostle Paul, is to be found in *2 Thess. chap. ii.* where he informs them there would be a great falling away from true Christianity, and the manifestation of a power of great wickedness in the church. He further tells them, that though the mystery of this iniquity was already at work, it was restrained by some opposing power, and that it could not appear openly in the world until that opposing power was removed. “Remember ye not, that when I was yet with you, I told you these things. And now ye know what withholdeth, that he” (the man of sin, &c.) “might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth, (*i. e.* hinders,) will let, until he be taken out of the way.”

That this opposing power was the *heathen Roman empire*, cannot be reasonably doubted, and that the ancient christians understood it as such may be distinctly inferred from the unanimous persuasion among the fathers as to the fact.—See *Tillotson, 2d Serm. on Rev. xiv. 13. Faber, Sacred Calendar of Prophecy*, i. 77, &c.

By the conversion of the heathen emperors to Christianity, this power that hindered the manifestation of anti-christ was removed, for henceforth that power as being given to the church aided essentially its further corruption, until at last the full development of what the apostle had predicted, made its appearance under the rule of the Bishop of Rome.

It does not fall within our limits to follow up our discourse concerning the Council of Nice, by the exhibition of other corruptions or other presumptuous speculations, which so rapidly followed each other in the eastern portion of the empire. I shall therefore only enumerate the subjects that were determined by the first four general councils, by which the reader will perceive that not one of them has the least practical bearing upon human obligations or responsibilities, but were mere metaphysical disputes of absurd theologians who contended bitterly with one another upon points of no practical value to mankind.

- A. D. 325. First Council of Nice decided that Christ was co-substantial with the Father.
- " 381. Council of Constantinople decided the Holy Ghost to be truly God.
- " 431. Council of Ephesus decided that the divine nature was truly united to the human nature in Christ, in one person.
- " 451. Council of Chalcedon determined that the divine and human natures of Christ were both distinct, and that the human nature was not lost or absorbed in the divine nature.

After the theologians in the eastern empire had thus deformed the simplicity of Christianity by their presumptuous speculations concerning the incomprehensible nature of the Godhead, and by undertaking to worship him after their own inventions, the theologians of the West, about the beginning of the fifth century, subverted the fundamental principle of Christianity, by establishing a doctrine that wholly misrepresented the condition of mankind as free agents undergoing probation before Jehovah on their own personal responsibilities. This was done by the introduction of the doctrine of Original Sin and its accompaniment of preventing grace.

As the incorporation of these doctrines into the simplicity of the christian faith was a marked period in the history of the corruptions of Christianity, I deem it advisable to exhibit the presumption of the theologians on the subject, as far as concerns the practical absurdity and inconsistencies of their proceeding. On the merits of the doctrines as tested by the Scripture I shall say nothing, for on that subject we have already sufficiently discoursed in a preceding page.

The question concerning the origin of **EVIL** had been in abeyance with the great body of christians, ever since the Manichees, and other sects produced from the oriental philosophy had fallen into numerical insignificance; though we are fully aware that the speculative temper of the theologians of these times was always more or less exercised upon the investigation. But whatever partial conclusions they may have adopted on the subject, we have no means of ascertaining beyond incidental expressions of individual opinion. The question however only awaited a sufficient cause to bring it before the world for ecclesiastical adjudication.

This cause was ultimately furnished about the beginning of the fifth century by a controversy that arose between St. Augustine,

one of the most eminent theologians of his time, and a monk named Pelagius, as to whether a man could repent and forsake his sins of himself, or whether he could only do so in consequence of God's having previously changed his heart by the secret operation of his grace, which in ecclesiastical terminology is designated as *preventing grace*, *i. e.* a degree of divine grace which *precedes* any human action.

St. Augustine was undoubtedly a zealous and devout christian. He was, as a minister of the gospel and a bishop of the church, actuated by the sincerest motives in fulfilling the duties that belonged to his office. But at the same time he was essentially a metaphysician, involved in all the speculations of the day, and as such he allowed his metaphysics to interfere with the practical discharge of his functions as a minister of the gospel.

St. Augustine had been in his youth an adherent to Manichean doctrines, but was ultimately converted to the Catholic faith, which he afterwards so eminently defended. But the subject of the origin of evil which was the basis of the Manichee doctrine, had made a deep impression on his mind and largely influenced all his speculative views for the remainder of his life.

But though the solution of this question might be of great interest to a metaphysician, it had nothing to do with the practical duties of a minister of the gospel. It was his plain duty to proclaim salvation to mankind according to the terms offered in the Scriptures, and to call upon all who heard him to forsake their evil ways and live righteously, as had been previously done by the apostles. Whatever therefore might be the origin of evil, the ministerial function was unaffected by any theory on the subject, for what the ministers of the gospel were required to preach, had been determined by the express commandment of Christ.

Though Augustine perfectly understood what was required of him as a preacher of Christianity, he was at the same time utterly perplexed to comprehend why all that heard the gospel preached, did not avail themselves of so gracious a dispensation. It was wholly unaccountable to him why so many persons should turn a deaf ear to a divine proclamation, that on the one hand offered the greatest blessings to those who obeyed it, and on the other denounced the most deplorable consequences to those who rejected it. To explain this circumstance Augustine fell into the ordinary notions of the theologians of his age, that an inherent radical corruption of nature existed in the natural man from his birth, which as they could not reconcile to themselves as being the con-

stitution of human nature as originally created by Jehovah, they then inferred that the apparent depravity of mankind must have been induced as the consequence of Adam's transgression in the garden of Eden. Having come to this conclusion, it followed necessarily from the premises they assumed, that no man could act righteously until Jehovah had operated on his heart by preventing grace, and hence in the inherent corruption of human nature through Adam's transgression, the theologians were enabled to explain why so many persons were to be found who lived regardless of the salvation offered them through the gospel.

Allowing that Augustine had satisfied himself fully on this subject, what was the actual value of the deduction he had made. Why, as belonging to metaphysics, a perplexing question had been apparently solved. As belonging to his ministerial function as a preacher of the gospel, it was of no importance whatever; for whether the proposed solution was true or not, it was nevertheless his duty as a minister of the gospel to call on all men to repent and to seek the promised salvation. This was his duty, and this only, every thing else pertained to the moral government of Jehovah, whose infinite perfections guaranteed an implicit belief that however incomprehensible the phenomena of things might appear to mankind, there could be nothing unreasonable in his requirement from human obedience.

When Pelagius asserted that all men should repent and forsake their sins, on the ground that Jehovah surely would not require from mankind what was impossible for them to perform, he consequently by this argument neither recognized the doctrine of Original Sin nor of preventing grace. Augustine immediately opposed Pelagius' view of the subject by metaphysical views derived from the existing phenomena of human nature, and of Jehovah's supposed mode of operating on them. He did not say that Pelagius ought not to call all men to repentance and to forsake their sins, for this he himself did to his utmost ability. But he charged Pelagius with entertaining a false view both of the condition of mankind, and of Jehovah's secret operation on them. Now this was a most impudent subject of controversy, for whether Pelagius or Augustine was wrong or right, they were both required to call upon mankind to repent and seek the salvation of Jehovah in the mode he had prescribed.

As ministers of the gospel it was wholly indifferent to their duties whether Jehovah acts by preventing grace or not, for if he does accomplish his purposes by such a mode, he will continue to

operate by preventing grace, though all the theologians on earth should deny it, and if God does not work by preventing grace, then he will not do so, though all the theologians in the world should affirm he did.

I presume, therefore, that every intelligent reader will perceive that this famous controversy between Augustine and Pelagius was nothing else than a dispute between two metaphysicians, concerning a subject that did not concern them in any manner as ministers of the gospel, and which did not affect their function in any particular, for both undoubtedly preached that all men should repent, and seek their salvation through Jesus Christ, and which they both asserted it was the most wonderful folly and perverseness that any one should neglect.

Though Pelagius has been put down in ecclesiastical records as a heretic, and Augustine has been enumerated as one of the brightest champions of orthodoxy, yet the hypothesis of the latter has had a most mischievous influence in the world, not merely as to its unfortunate influence in systematic theology, by which, as we have shewn, (Vol. I. 305, &c.) the whole simplicity of Christianity has been changed into a metaphysical system of human presumptions; but the doctrine of preventing grace has especially had the most injurious influence upon that class of persons the most deeply interested in the call to repentance, for it has furnished careless and irreligious persons with an excuse to defer repentance. They are informed continually by the clergy that mankind cannot repent of themselves, and that God must first change their hearts by his preventing grace. Is it any wonder then that thousands of persons should live an irreligious life, half convinced, half uncertain of the truth of this doctrine, and deem it useless to make any exertion to save their souls until they shall be enabled to do so by the preventing grace of God. This they assume will change their hearts, renew their wills, and make religion a delightful service instead of being as it now appears to them, not only insipid but altogether wearisome.*

* The following observations from the British Critic for January, 1842, a high toned hierarchical publication, are strictly correct in themselves, however little we agree as to other inferences deduced from them. "Whatever religion the mass of the people have or have not, thus much most of them hold:—that Christ died for them, and that if they are to be saved, it is by faith in that doctrine, that it does not lie in their power to make that faith strong and vital and heartfelt, that such a faith is the gift of God, to be waited for; that when it comes, if ever, it will naturally produce the fruit of a religious life; that *then* all goodness and piety, prayers, reading, industry, temperance, honesty, and the like, will become easy, spontaneous, and delightful; that religion will have no pains or difficul-

I shall here close my exposition of the corruptions of the primitive christians, for after the middle of the fifth century there was little if any thing left to be done but to reduce the presumptions and will-worship of preceding times into more systematic forms. This was accomplished afterwards by the Bishops of Rome, who as the recognized successors of the apostle Peter, about the beginning of the seventh century became the head of the Holy Catholic Church. But before I proceed to exhibit the influence of the Popes, and the corruptions of Christianity established by them, I deem it advisable to prepare the way by a summary of the will-worship and corruption that had been superinduced upon the simplicity of Christianity previous to the irruption of the German barbarians into the Roman Empire, and also those circumstances that gradually gave rise to Papal supremacy.

In order to estimate the extent to which the corruptions of Christianity had been carried in the earlier portion of the fifth century, it is expedient we should again re-state what Jehovah had required of mankind according to the expositions of the New Testament. Christians had been called on to accomplish a moral perfection in all those particulars that involved their individual personality in the *first instance*, and their several relations to their fellow-men in the *second*, as fathers, husbands, mothers, wives, and citizens. They were to perform all these several duties with a perfectly upright and sincere mind, so that the rule and principle of their action being incorporated by a continual practice into their every motive, a holy or perfect life would be the necessary result.

Such were the practical purposes contemplated by the Christian Dispensation, and these only. Prayer to Jehovah, faith in Jesus Christ, the promised influences of the Holy Spirit, were only professed means whereby men might be either enabled to perform what was required of them, or whereby their transgressions might be forgiven; for the doctrine was broadly laid down in the New Testament that all men not only required grace to attain to perfection, but that all men without exception required forgiveness of their sins from time to time continually. Such a condition of things is necessarily involved in the theory every where implied in the Scriptures, that mankind as imperfect creatures, are undergoing a probationary discipline as free agents, on their own responsi-

ties except some few spiritual contests in the early stage, and such trials as may subsequently arise from the visitations of Providence, and the persecutions of men; that meanwhile, any attempt at religious obedience is useless, prayers are mere idle formalities, and the sacrament a greater condemnation," &c.

bilities, so that those who will not perfect themselves in the requisites of a holy life shall be condemned at the day of judgment; while those who have attained to perfection through the assisting grace of God, shall be received as the subjects of that everlasting kingdom prepared for the righteous from the foundations of the world.

Human duties then on the one hand, and the grace of God on the other, having been most distinctly announced to mankind in the promulgation of Christianity, there ought at no time to have been any misapprehension concerning them if christians had properly appreciated the condescension of their Maker in revealing them a system so plain and intelligible. And as it ought to have been self-evident to them, that they could do nothing of themselves that could possibly be inherently acceptable to their Creator, so there is no excuse for mankind before Jehovah when they forsake his appointed scheme, and devise another in their insane presumption.

To exhibit the extent of the corruptions of Christianity about the middle of the fifth century, I shall arrange them under the following heads: corruptions of doctrine; of institutions; of the practical duties of life, and open immorality.

The CORRUPTIONS OF DOCTRINE were as follow:

They had perverted the scheme of Christianity as it regarded Jehovah's peculiar position towards mankind, by the invention of the doctrine of the Trinity, which abstraction they not only worshipped, but they also prayed directly to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to the Holy Spirit.

They had corrupted the mediatorial scheme not only by the direct worship of the Lord Jesus Christ as the second person of the Trinity, but they also recognized angels and dead saints to be intercessors for mankind before God, and as such offered prayers to them and the Virgin Mary whom they more especially glorified in this work.

They had further corrupted the scheme of God's grace, by teaching that fasting, celibacy, voluntary poverty, painful watchings, dispensing alms, &c. were means of grace through which forgiveness of sins, and personal holiness were to be obtained.*

* According to Hagenbach, (*Hist. Doct.* i. 181,) Origen enumerated seven different modes for obtaining the remission of sin. First, that which is granted in baptism: second, that obtained by martyrdom: third, by alms: fourth, by forgiveness of those who have trespassed against us: fifth, by the conversion of other persons: sixth, by exceeding great love: seventh, by penance and repentance.

They had introduced a bowing down and worship to figures of the cross, to images and pictures of saints, of Jehovah, of Jesus Christ, of the Holy Ghost, and of the Trinity. They made constantly the sign of the cross over their bodies as preserving them from evil influences, or as a part of divine worship, and they sprinkled themselves with a water consecrated by the priests, which it was asserted, would preserve them from evil spirits, accidents, sickness, &c.

They also believed the prayers of their clergy benefited the souls of the dead, in consequence of which a large portion of their supposed religious services were in behalf of dead men, who had bequeathed money to the clergy for this purpose.

It was believed that the mere repetition of the Lord's prayer and the creed, each said over ten, twenty, or more times, in a succession of alternations, was an acceptable service to the Almighty.

They believed the clergy had power from God to absolve men from their sins, when they complied with ecclesiastical injunctions and appointments.

They had perverted the scheme of Christianity as regarded the position of mankind before Jehovah, by representing them to be so entirely depraved in consequence of Adam's transgression, that they could not repent nor amend their lives until changed by *preventing grace*, by which doctrine careless and irreligious men continued to live in sin, by deluding themselves with the notion that it would be useless to attempt reformation until moved by the Holy Spirit.

THE CORRUPTIONS OF CHRIST'S INSTITUTIONS were as follow:

Instead of regarding *baptism* as a simple ceremony appointed for the reception of persons making a profession of faith in Jesus Christ as the Messiah, it had been perverted into a supposed sanctifying ordinance, by which men's previous sins would be washed away, and hence many would not be baptized until they thought themselves near death.

Instead of administering baptism to those who could appreciate its intention, they had adopted a practice of baptizing unconscious infants, and persons in the agonies of death, as if the benefit was in the *opus operatum*.

Instead of confining baptism to the application of mere water, they consecrated a holy water for the purpose, they put milk and honey into the mouths of the recipient, made the sign of the cross over them, and touched them with a consecrated oil termed *chrism*.

Instead of commemorating *the Lord's last supper* in the manner he had appointed, they consecrated the bread and wine by a service of their own invention, by which it was believed these symbols acquired sanctifying properties, and thus became beneficial as an *opus operatum*. And though the term transubstantiation was of later invention than the fifth century, yet the doctrine without the term, was recognized as early as the third century.

Instead of regarding the censure of the apostles as to the observance of days, *Coloss.* ii. 16, 17, *Galatians* iv. 9—11, they had instituted a number of holy days whether as festivals or fasts, such as the Sunday, Lent, Easter, Christmas, &c.

They also recognized a body of clergy with priestly functions; when neither clergy nor priests had been appointed by Christ.

Instead of assemblies of christians for mutual exhortation or instruction, they had instituted a direct and pompous worship to the Almighty Creator of all things, consisting of formal prayers, repetitions of metaphysical creeds, scraps of the gospel and epistles, which were chanted by priests in splendid vestments, assisted by choirs of singers, and performers on musical instruments, burning of perfumes, &c. It was further believed that whoever attended the performance of this ritual service in a devout or respectful manner worshipped Jehovah, from which act they might anticipate divine blessings.

THE CORRUPTIONS OF THE PRACTICAL DUTIES OF LIFE were as follow :

Instead of fulfilling the evident purposes for which Jehovah had made mankind male and female, the christians of the fifth century believed that celibacy was a more holy state than that of marriage, or at least, a state in which the greatest degree of holiness, only could be attained. In consequence of which notion, multitudes of both sexes renounced the world in which they had so many duties to perform, under the constitution given them by their Creator, as husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, and citizens, and became hermits, monks, or nuns, who lived in solitude, omitting the duties required of them, that they might perform others of their own fantastic invention, consisting of fastings, vigils, maceration of the body, hourly prayers day and night,* &c.

* This institution of monks and nuns was derived from the heathens of the east, who had convents of religious celibates for centuries preceding the advent of our Saviour. This subject is well exhibited in a work recently published by Mr. Ruffner, late President Washington College, Virginia, entitled "Fathers of the Desert."

IMMORALITIES OF LIFE IN CHRISTIANS OF FIFTH CENTURY.

As this subject is involved with several considerations of great importance to a correct view of the conduct of mankind under the whole continuance of the Christian Dispensation, I cannot dispose of it in the brief manner with which I have enumerated the preceding corruptions of Christianity.

The corruptions we have just specified, the reader will perceive to be those that regarded Jehovah's position towards mankind, and of mankind's position towards their Creator, the corruption of prescribed means of grace, or inventions of men to obtain pardon or grace from Jehovah. All these corruptions, however, distinctly recognized the fact that all men were sinners, who had as such violated those commandments of God which they were under the obligation of strictly obeying. Nor was there any neglect on the part of ecclesiastical teachers in the inculcation of the requirements of the moral law. For though disobedience to the church constituted a great sin in their estimation, yet the ten commandments, and the requirement of loving our neighbor as ourselves, have ever been in every age since the advent, insisted on as the fundamental principles of christian action; and which if not strictly observed, constituted human sin.

The consideration of these particulars of moral teaching it is very important to remember, for in the midst of all the corruption, will-worship, and irreligion of former times, the true principles of moral action under the requirements of Christianity were nevertheless also forcibly presented to the minds of all intelligent and devoutly inclined persons, and thousands no doubt did properly estimate them and fulfil the purposes of their being, although surrounded by other men either superstitious or immoral in their lives.

With this brief explanation as to individual cases, we can perfectly comprehend that while Christianity, as regarded in its doctrines and institutions, was constantly corrupted by the innovations and will-worship that were gradually introduced into the system, and while at the same time that its moral obligations were enforced by a severe penitential discipline, yet nevertheless morality itself was deeply undermined through the facilities offered by the clergy for the forgiveness of human transgressions. It signifies little that the principles of morality are uncorrupted, if the punishment of immoralities can be averted by such easy modes that men will allow themselves immoral indulgences, because they are able or willing to pay the price required for the propitiation. In the

earlier history of Christianity this feature in the imperfection of human nature soon manifested itself, and was in vain resisted by increasing the amount and duration of ecclesiastical penance. Wealthy and influential persons whatever might have been their transgression, sooner or later obtained reconciliation with the church, which was then esteemed to be the same thing as forgiveness from God. What was the actual value of the rejection of the Emperor Philip from the communion by the Bishop of Rome, (*Eusebius' Church Hist. lib. vi. chap. 34.*) or that more famous instance where St. Ambrose rejected the Emperor Theodosius, (*Gibbon, Decl. and Fall, chap. xxvii.*) when after a brief show of penitence the church again received them into communion. The consequence was that gradually the offences of christians against morality and ecclesiastical regulations were so easily forgiven, that the system of penitential discipline became nearly a dead letter.* The reluctance or inability of the clergy to enforce the full amount of ecclesiastical penance, even so early as the days of Tertullian and Novatian, gave so great an offence to the more strict portion of christian society, as to induce them to withdraw from the communion of the general church. That there may have been an unreasonable austerity on certain points among these early puritans is very possible, but judging by the known phenomena of human nature, and allowing for more or less error or misjudgment on both sides, the lesser amount will generally be found with the more strict and conscientious.

* Thus for instance, (*Butler's Fest. and Fasts, 220.*) "St. Basil says it is forbid for an adulteress to be discovered by her penance lest it should be an occasion for her death. Nay, to avoid giving any suspicion to a jealous husband, though she passed through the regular term of penance, she did not go through the regular stages, &c. St. Basil lays down the same rule for wilful murder," &c.

By such rules as these the infliction of penance became a mere dead letter if the clergy choose to overlook them, or to accept something as a substitute. Hence the controversy between Novatian and Cornelius (*Socrates, Eccles. Hist. lib. iv. chap. 28*) commenced in the circumstance, that the latter had received into the communion of the church, those christians who had sacrificed to idols during the Decian persecution. While the public mind was agitated with the dispute on this subject, Cornelius wrote letters *promising indulgence to delinquents after baptism*, and as Socrates remarks, "every one identified himself with that view which favored his previous habits and inclinations. Those who had pleasure in sin, encouraged by the license thus granted them, took occasion from it to revel in every species of criminality."

The character of Novatian, which has been exceedingly misrepresented in ordinary ecclesiastical histories, has been well vindicated by *Robinson, Eccles. Res. 126, &c.*

A further injury was inflicted upon Christianity after the second century in the laxity of principle and worldly-mindedness, that was exhibited in the lives of many of the more prominent ecclesiastics, for they, as undergoing the common probation of human nature, were unable to resist the corrupting influences of power and wealth that many of them enjoyed in virtue of their ecclesiastical position. At the same time also, the splendor and authority exercised by the more dignified clergy, had the further injurious effect of inducing persons to embrace the ecclesiastical life as a means of gratifying ambition or sensuality. Without going into any specifications on these particulars, we shall only use a general statement on the subject made by Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, (A. D. 250.) In his letter concerning the lapsed, he remarks, “the religion of the clergy slackened and decayed, the faith of priests and deacons grew languid and inactive, works of charity were discontinued, and an universal license and corruption prevailed every where, and had tainted all ranks and orders of men among us, &c. Not only rash oaths, but even perjuries were rife and common, a haughty contempt of ecclesiastical rulers had generally prevailed, mutual contentions and revilings had spread their poisons far and near, divers bishops who should have taught others better, both by their example and persuasion, neglecting their high trust and their commission from above, entered upon the management of secular affairs, and leaving their chair and the charge with it, strolled about from place to place in different provinces upon mercantile business and in quest of an ignominious gain. And thus the poor of the church were miserably neglected, while the bishops were intent upon nothing but their own private profits, which they were forward to advance at any rate and even by the foulest methods.” See also *Eusebius, Eccles. Hist. lib. viii. chap. 1.*

The christian world, by the middle of the fifth century, having thus corrupted the system appointed by Christ or his apostles, and having instituted a grosser scheme of will-worship than had ever been recognized by the Jews, as well as having also fallen into the grossest immoralities, they were in consequence forsaken by Jehovah, his providential protection was withdrawn, and the Western Roman Empire was overrun and dismembered by the German barbarians. The Eastern Empire endured in its general extent one hundred and fifty years longer, when by the irruption of the followers of Mahomed, the Emperor lost all his provinces,

and Christianity nearly all her subjects, to the Eastward of the Bosphorus.

As national sins arise from the improper actions of nations, regarded as an assemblage of intellectual and moral free agents, so they are ordinarily punished for their transgressions by causes that have a direct connection with the peculiar improprieties of their conduct. Thus the Roman Empire when in the enjoyment of a high degree of civilization, had been gradually brought to a correct knowledge of the principles of religion and morality under the preaching of the gospel; which dispensation of mercy, peace and good will, they, as being the ruling power upon the earth, were bound to communicate to all other men. At first the christians of the Roman Empire discharged their duty in this particular, they had partially converted the barbarian nations on their frontiers, and shewed them the way to civilization and true religion, by which they made brethren of enemies and barbarians. If they had continued to preserve the simplicity of Christianity in its apostolic appointments; by the grace of Jehovah co-operating with them in the work, they would have been enabled to have converted the barbarians every where to the principles of christian truth. But when the Roman christians not only became immoral in their lives, but had corrupted Christianity into a ritual of will-worship and superstition, scarcely different from the rites and external exhibitions of heathenism, Jehovah regarded them as persons who no longer observed his covenant with them, and the consequence was that not only the power of the Empire declined, but the Goths, Vandals, Huns, &c. in the end burst through the feeble guards of the frontiers, and their terrible invasion became Jehovah's punishment.

The christians of the Roman Empire in the fifth century were thus scourged for their sins through the intervention of natural causes, but still as free agents they had a remedy within their power, if they would return back again to the first principles of gospel truth as it was laid down for them in the New Testament. But instead of doing this, they, like the Jews after their return from the Babylonian captivity, persisted in their system of will-worship,* and consequently instead of communicating Christianity in its simplicity, to the barbarians that had settled themselves on the Roman territory, they taught them the presumptuous doctrines

* The misconduct of the christian world as to this matter, is distinctly alluded to in *Rev. ix. 20, 21.*

and absurd superstitions of their will-worship, so that the barbarian kings and nobles in adopting such a system, then completed its corruption, by allowing the bishop of Rome who possessed great spiritual influence, to use their temporal power to the establishment of a universal ecclesiastical system of which he became both head and despot.

The rise of the Pope of Rome to universal spiritual dominion as the Vicar of Christ, and authoritative head of the christian world, was a necessary result of that corruption of Christianity which recognized the Holy Catholic Church, and a body of ecclesiastics, as being divine institutions of Christ. A corporation of divinely commissioned clergy being thus supposed to be appointed to preside over all professing christians, it necessarily required functionaries of different grades and powers for the discharge of the great work, and the more the doctrine of One Holy Catholic Church was insisted upon as being essential to Christianity, it became continually more indispensable that some one eminent bishop should be recognized as the head of the whole system, who should enforce harmony of doctrine, institution, and practice, throughout all Christendom.

Upon what particular bishop this high dignity should be conferred was a matter that was slowly determined, for the previous doctrine from the fourth to the seventh century having been that all bishops were virtually successors of the apostles, so no one was regarded as superior in spiritual dignity to the others, although their relative importance might differ widely as respected the different sees they occupied. To comprehend therefore, the means by which the Bishop of Rome ultimately attained his exalted position, it will be necessary to take a brief view of the subject of church government.

We have already shewn, Vol. II. 181, &c. how christian societies or churches were formed under the preaching of the apostles and their associates, and that they continued to be governed by their irresponsible elders in separate or independent congregations, until, according to St. Jerome, the elders, "through the instigation of the devil," became ambitious of distinction among themselves, and thus threw their several congregations into confusion by their strife and factions. To remedy this mischief, bishops were instituted to govern the elders or presbyters, and that no measure should be undertaken without his approbation. Taking our present subject up from this condition of things as a starting point, we go on to remark, that from these churches or congregations thus ruled over by a bishop

and his presbyters, and which for the most part were at first confined to the larger cities of the Empire, the gospel was gradually communicated to the adjacent smaller towns and villages, where congregations were organized under the direction of an ecclesiastic who appears to have been commonly termed *chorepiscopus*, or country bishop, and who regarded himself and the flock under his charge, as being directly connected with the bishop or church from whose action their conversion and organization had proceeded. These several country congregations taken together with the mother church, constituted what was called among the Greeks *the diocese* of the bishop. As the work of conversion was continually enlarging these dioceses in the several provinces of the Roman Empire, it would seem that the action of the various bishops throughout any province, at last became circumscribed by the political boundaries of the provinces, which thus seemed to designate the limitation of their missionary enterprise, as contrasted with the labors of other bishops in adjoining provinces. Sooner or later some such conventional principle must be adopted to prevent interference with each other, and none seems more reasonable than that they should recognize for this purpose, the already existing boundaries of the different provinces of the Empire.

After the second century, when the various bishops and clergy of a province began to meet in councils, it became necessary as a matter of order, that some one of them should preside over the assembly, which honor was commonly conferred upon the bishop of the chief city of the province, in whose church the meeting ordinarily took place. He by this circumstance gradually acquired the appellation of *Metropolitan*, or chief bishop of the province, and who communicated by writing to other eminent bishops of the Empire, as far as he pleased, an account of whatever had been done in the councils thus assembled. These Metropolitans gradually controlled the clergy of the province, at first from the expediency of such a regulation, and afterwards by an express recognition of the imperial government after the time of the conversion of Constantine the Great.

In the third century, the bishops of Rome, Alexandria and Antioch were regarded throughout the christian world not only as Metropolitans, but as enjoying a certain pre-eminence over the bishops of all other christian churches, partly from the circumstance that they had been founded by apostles or evangelists, and partly from certain local and special considerations that we shall presently enumerate.

The reverence with which churches were regarded that had been founded by an apostle, was not a mere compliment, but proceeded from a very natural consideration, which the reader can easily appreciate, if he adverts to what was said Vol. II. 263, &c. on the subject of the oral teaching of the primitive christians during the first two centuries. Copies of the New Testament were then rare, and had scarcely even been collected into the present volume. During these times however, christians had been greatly distracted by the controversies that had arisen among them, and which were deeply involved in conflicting traditional expositions, as well as upon statements made in apocryphal gospels and epistles that circulated more or less among them, and whose character it was a difficult matter for them to determine. In such states of perplexity, as they had forsaken the simple doctrines inculcated by the apostles, and had got bewildered with the traditions and teachings of men, they looked to the churches of Ephesus, Corinth, Rome, Antioch, &c. for instruction on such matters; for, as these churches had been planted by apostles, it was a reasonable prejudice that the truth had been more clearly imparted to them, than was the case with churches founded by less distinguished ministers of the gospel. It was simply in this point of view that Irenæus made that reference to the Church of Rome that has since been so much perverted as to its significance by the advocates of papal supremacy.

But Rome, Alexandria and Antioch had obtained a further pre-eminence over other churches *founded by the apostles*, in the fact that they were also capital cities of the Empire, in which were congregated a greater number of christians of learning, talents and wealth, than in less populous cities. From their position in these various respects, recourse was constantly had to them for advice, relief, or protection, on the part of their christian brethren elsewhere, whether clergy or laity, under all circumstances of need. Oppression on the part of the bishops towards their elders, or resistance on the part of the elders or laity to the bishops, had also not unfrequently taken place at these times, and their mutual complaints were brought before the more influential churches of Rome, Alexandria and Antioch, for the purpose of soliciting the interference of their christian charity and sympathy in those particulars. On all such subjects the bishop and church of Rome were more frequently referred to than any other, for being at the capital city of the whole Empire, there was a continual opportunity to communicate with that church from all the provinces. Individuals were

often required by their temporal affairs to visit Rome, where they could at the same time consult the bishop or church, whereas they were only accidentally obliged to visit either Antioch or Alexandria.

This circumstance of itself tended greatly to exalt the bishop of the church at Rome, to which must be further added the other advantages he possessed as presiding over a church that had been specially instructed by Paul, and as was asserted also from a very early period, by Peter; the two most eminent individuals of the apostolic body. Every circumstance therefore seemed to designate the bishop of Rome as the most suitable person to preside over all Christendom, and he had enjoyed this eminent position in the prejudices of the christian world, for nearly two hundred years before he found a rival in the bishop of Constantinople.

To understand the merits of the controversy that took place between the bishops of Rome and Constantinople respecting ecclesiastical supremacy, it is necessary to apprise the reader that the Emperor Constantine had previously modified the external conventional forms that regulated the christian churches of the Roman Empire, by the appointment of four ecclesiastical dignitaries termed patriarchs, who divided between them the jurisdiction of all ecclesiastical matters in their respective patriarchates. These four patriarchs, were the bishops of Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, and Constantinople, the last of which had this dignity conferred on him solely in consequence of a residence at the seat of government, where he was regarded as being a member of the imperial court. Hence it became a matter connected with regal state to exalt the bishop of Constantinople, in which particular the bishop himself was ever ready to avail himself of every opportunity that tended to his aggrandizement.

At a council held at Constantinople A. D. 381, by authority of Theodosius the Great, the bishop of that city was placed next in courtly rank after the bishop or patriarch of Rome, who enjoyed the first place as a matter of precedence,* and consequently above those of Alexandria and Antioch. This promotion excited the greatest indignation on the part of the two latter prelates, but as

* That the bishop of Rome was not regarded in the first instance as being superior in authority to the other patriarchs, is perfectly clear from sixth canon of Council of Nice. *See Bishop Bull's Vindication, &c. 98, 114; Mosheim. Com. before Constantine, &c. II. 109.*

Du Pin, (Council of Nice,) attempts to explain this canon in such a manner as to neutralize its force, by saying it neither proves nor disproves the supremacy of the Pope; whereas it is distinct as to its import against the papal claim.

they had no means of resistance they were obliged to submit. Seventy years after, at a council held at Chalcedon A. D. 451, it was decreed by an express canon on the subject, that the *same rights and honors* which had been conferred upon the bishop of Rome, were due to the bishop of Constantinople, *on account of the equal dignity and lustre of the two cities, in which these prelates exercised their authority.*

Shortly after the passage of this decree by the Council of Chalcedon, the bishop of Constantinople began to contend for a rank superior to the bishop of Rome, which was followed by an attempt on his part to compel the bishops of Alexandria and Antioch to acknowledge his supremacy in that particular. In consequence of the oppressive conduct of the bishop of Constantinople, these two bishops were induced to appeal to the sympathies of the bishop of Rome, who by their support was thus the better enabled to resist his rival at Constantinople. These applications the popes very adroitly represented at a later period, as proving that the bishop of Rome had always exercised a supremacy in the christian church in controlling all other patriarchs or bishops.

The Roman Empire which had existed under one sovereign until the year A. D. 395, on the decease of Theodosius the Great, was divided into two separate monarchies under his sons Arcadius and Honorius, the former of which governed the Eastern portion of the empire, and the latter that of the West, the respective boundaries of which it is not necessary we should specify.

The Eastern Empire, though it gradually became much circumscribed in its extent, continued for a long time. The Western Empire was subverted about A. D. 476, by the German barbarians, who had previously established themselves as nations at various periods throughout Gaul, Italy, and Spain. Those who first settled in Italy, after a while were subjugated by armies sent from the Eastern Empire under the command of Belisarius and Narses, and thus a part of the Western Empire was again brought under the dominion of the emperors at Constantinople.* They after this time governed Italy for about one hundred and eighty-five years

* “Their immediate jurisdiction which was afterwards consecrated as the patrimony of St. Peter, extended over modern Romagna, Ferrara, and Cominchio, five maritime cities from Rimini to Ancona, and a second Pentapolis between the Adriatic coast and the Appenines. The subordinate provinces of Rome, Venice, and Naples, which were separated by hostile lands from Ravenna, acknowledged both in peace and war the supremacy of the Exarch.” The three islands of Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica, also adhered to the empire; as well as the further Calabria. *Gibbon Dec. and Fall, chap. 45.*

by an officer called the *Exarch*, who generally resided at Ravenna, a strongly fortified town on the Adriatic sea, about one hundred and sixty miles distant from Rome. The Exarch however had little influence further than as the representative of the emperor at Constantinople, but as he had a military force under his command, he thus guaranteed the religion and civilization of Italy from the incursions of the Lombards, who had settled themselves in the northern part of the peninsula about A. D. 573, and who only waited their opportunity to subjugate the southern portion also.

As the Italians had been generally converted to Christianity before this period, the patriarch or bishop of Rome, as being the religious head of the Western Empire, naturally became the most eminent person in that region, for the ancient patrician or noble families of Rome, as well as most other wealthy or influential persons sooner or later emigrated to Constantinople, where they sought to enjoy personal consideration in the honors and splendor of the imperial court. Hence few if any persons of eminence were left at Rome, who by their rank or past associations preserved the hereditary respect of the Roman people. The bishop of Rome therefore became the most influential person in the Western empire, and hence it was of considerable importance that the emperors of the East should conciliate one so eminently able to either favor or obstruct the exercise of the imperial authority in Italy.*

This circumstance enabled the bishops of Rome to counteract from steady and permanent considerations, the personal influence of the bishop of Constantinople at the imperial court, where his intrigues might otherwise have accomplished every thing according to his desire. Indeed by his political position in the West the bishop of Rome had a great advantage over his rival, who as being

* Even as early as A. D. 375, the pomp, dignity and influence of the Bishop of Rome was so great, that Ammianus Marcellinus, a heathen Roman historian said, "It was no wonder to see those who were ambitious of human greatness contending with so much heat and animosity for that dignity, because when they had obtained it, they were sure to be enriched by the offerings of the *matrons*, of appearing abroad in great splendor, of being admired for their costly coaches, sumptuous in their feasts, out-doing sovereign princes in the expenses of their table." This condition of things also led Prætexatus, a heathen, who was *præfect* of the city, to say, "*make me Bishop of Rome, and I will be a christian too.*"—Jones *Hist. Christ. Church*, 180.

The extensive jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome during the fifth and sixth centuries, may be understood by the fact that he was in Southern Italy, patriarch of two hundred and forty dioceses, and metropolitan of one hundred and ten. *Palmer on the Church, quoted in Maitland's Church of the Catacombs, page 241.*

at the imperial court, was more or less involved in the various intrigues that always are found in such an atmosphere, and therefore was at one time as much affected by the displeasure or caprice of the reigning emperor, as he was at another time by his partiality.

There was another circumstance that gave a still greater stability to the bishop of Rome as compared with the bishop of Constantinople. The people of the West, where he was universally recognized as supreme, spoke the Latin language only, while the vernacular tongue of the East was the Greek. In consequence of this circumstance the more serious and practical Latins were ignorant of, and consequently were uninfluenced by those incessant metaphysical speculations, that agitated the minds of the subtle and versatile Greeks. The bishop of Rome being the only person with whom the Eastern bishops communicated, he imparted to his spiritual flock just as much or as little, as he thought necessary on such subjects, and as this was done under the construction that he put upon them, the consequence was his opinions were generally adopted. Hence the close union between the bishops and clergy of the West with the bishop of Rome, who by this means was often enabled to determine the subjects deliberated in the councils assembled on various occasions. By degrees this powerful influence of the bishop of Rome became so manifest, that finally there was no controversy in the East in which the different parties did not even with the utmost flattery and servility seek his favor, and through him the suffrages of the Western clergy.

While the patriarch or bishop of Rome was thus continually increasing in power and influence, the patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch had become more insignificant. Only the bishop of Constantinople, as sustained by the favor of the emperors, and the privileges granted by the Council of Chalcedon, could pretend to cope with the bishop of Rome; but while this last enjoyed the utmost influence in ecclesiastical affairs at the head of a body of united clergy, the former was essentially dependent on the personal caprice of the emperors, or the ladies and eunuchs of the palace. He was furthermore continually harrassed by the controversial spirit of the Eastern clergy, which divided and subdivided them into metaphysical factions irreconcilable with each other.

The contest between the patriarchs of Rome and Constantinople was originally merely for pre-eminence in point of rank or dignity, the latter founding his claim upon being bishop at the capital city of the empire, the seat of government, and the residence of the

emperor. The bishop of Rome adroitly said little or nothing concerning the greatness of Rome, or of the associations connected with the history of a city, from whence the empire itself had proceeded. This every one could do for him, he insisted essentially upon the fact, that while the bishop of Constantinople was merely a political appointment, that the church of Rome over which he presided, had been founded by St. Paul and St. Peter, of which this last, it was asserted, had been the first bishop. It was also the boast of the Roman church, that these two eminent apostles had suffered martyrdom in that city, where their sacred bodies were still preserved in the utmost reverence. All these circumstances gave the bishop of Rome a vast advantage over the bishop of Constantinople in the view of the christians of the fifth and sixth centuries, and fully prepared them in the West to receive the doctrine ultimately advanced by the popes, that they had succeeded not only to the bishopric, but also to the authority of St. Peter as the vicar of Christ.

Though the term *pope*, derived from the Greek *papa*, or father, had been applied generally to all the Eastern bishops, it was not used in the West until about the beginning of the sixth century, when the bishop of Rome was thus designated in contradistinction to all other Western prelates. *Greg. vii. a. d. 1076*, first decreed it should be peculiar to him and his successors.—*Father Paul Hist. Benef.* chap. 18.

The last controversy between the bishops of Rome and Constantinople for precedence or pre-eminence, took place about a. d. 588, when John, bishop of Constantinople, surnamed *the faster*, having assembled by his own authority a council to investigate certain charges made against the patriarch of Antioch, on this occasion thought fit to assume the title of *Universal Patriarch*, (*οικουμενικος*) i. e. as pertaining to the whole earth, or more strictly for all Christendom, which title the council authorized him and his successors in the see of Constantinople, to use for the future. This was not actually a new title to this bishop, for it had been used occasionally at least, long before this time. “The Emperor Leo had styled Stephen, bishop of Constantinople, *Archbishop and Universal Patriarch*, in ten laws, and the same title was given by Justinian to Menas, Epiphanius, and Anthemis, also bishops of this diocese;* so that it

* If the author of a work translated from the French language and entitled the *Hist. of the Court of Rome* (note to page 6) be correct, Justinian had used such language to Pope John II. as would justify him also to assume the title of universal bishop. For in his Code, *Tit. 1. L. 8*. “he calls him head of all the holy

may be called a vulgar error in historians to date the original of that title from the time of Pope Pelagius, or his successor Gregory.”—*Bowers' Hist. of Popes, art. Pelagius II.*

Pope Pelagius, who in the first instance opposed this assumption of *John the faster*, having died very soon afterwards, the quarrel was taken up by his successor Pope Gregory the Great, whose language respecting the title of *Universal Patriarch or Bishop* is too remarkable to be omitted. He remonstrated with the bishop of Constantinople against the christian impropriety of any individual undertaking to assume so arrogant a title, and argued against it by a reference to all those principles of humility that had characterized the action of the apostles themselves. “If,” said Gregory, “none of the apostles would be called *Universal*, what will you answer on the last day to Christ the head of the church universal? You who by arrogating that name strive to subject all his members to yourself.” He then proceeds to load the title of *Universal Patriarch* with all the terms of reproach that he could think of, calling it “vain, ambitious, profane, impious, execrable, anti-christian, blasphemous, infernal, diabolical;” and in a letter to the bishop of Constantinople who succeeded *John the faster*, he affirms, that “whoever calls himself *Universal Bishop*, or desires to be so called in the pride of his heart, is the forerunner of anti-christ.”

Gregory also wrote to the Emperor and Empress, begging them to interfere and control the bishop of Constantinople, urging nearly the same considerations he had made use of to the bishop himself; but further alleging, there could be no *Universal Bishop*, for says he, “if there were an universal bishop, and he should err, the universal church would err with him.”

The remonstrances of Gregory, however, had no more effect upon the Emperor than they had upon the bishop of Constantinople; nay, he rather favored his assumption, though without openly espousing his cause, for he thought the title of *Universal Bishop* well suited to the rank and dignity of the bishop of the imperial city. Ever since that time, however, the bishop of Constantinople has called himself *Universal Patriarch*.

Pope Gregory having failed in his exertions to induce the Bishop of Constantinople to relinquish this arrogant title, he then in the temper of Diogenes trampling on the robe of Plato, resolved to oppose him by his own great personal humility, hence he

churches, and states he had made haste to subject and unite to the seat of his holiness, all the priests of the whole East.” As I have no opportunity to consult Justinian's Code, I have been unable to verify this reference.

assumed the title of "*servant of servants*," which his successors have preserved even when issuing the most arrogant and audacious mandates.

This dispute between Pope Gregory the Great and the Bishop of Constantinople, is of the utmost importance in the controversy between the Protestants and Catholics, for nothing can be clearer than that the Popes of Rome did not claim any authoritative supremacy previous to A. D. 588, the language of Gregory being wholly inconsistent with such an assumption as must be sufficiently evident from the quotations we have made. The reader therefore must not be perplexed on the subject, either by the forgeries of the Papal advocates since that time, or by the exhibition of their superior jurisdiction over other bishops living within his own patriarchate, such as took place under Pope Leo the Great, A. D. 445; nor by the concessions of other patriarchs or bishops when speaking of the superiority of the Roman see, in virtue of having been once occupied by St. Peter. They meant nothing more by this admission, than that the Bishop of Rome was, as such, entitled to precedence in point of rank over the bishops of all other churches whenever they met together in councils, at court, or at any other places. The great importance attached to etiquette and ceremony at these times, may be comprehended from the frivolous regulations existing among the civil dignitaries of the Empire, as may be seen by the annexed note.*

* "The manly pride of the Romans," (*Gibbon, Decl. and Fall, chap. 17.*) "content with substantial power, had left to the vanity of the East the forms and ceremonies of ostentatious greatness. But when they lost even the semblance of those virtues which were derived from their ancient freedom, the simplicity of Roman manners was insensibly corrupted by the stately affectation of the courts of Asia. The distinctions of personal merit and influence so conspicuous in a republic, so feeble and obscure under a monarchy, were abolished by the despotism of the emperors, who substituted in their room a severe subordination of rank and office, from the titled slaves who were seated on the steps of the throne, to the meanest instruments of arbitrary power, &c. In this divine hierarchy, (for such it is frequently styled,) every rank was marked with the most scrupulous exactness, and its dignity was displayed in a variety of trifling and solemn ceremonies, which it was a study to learn and a sacrilege to neglect. The purity of the Latin language was debased by adopting in the intercourse of pride and flattery a profusion of epithets which Tully would scarcely have understood, and which Augustus would have rejected with indignation. The principal officers of the Empire were saluted even by the sovereign himself with the deceitful titles of *your Sincerity, your Gravity, your Eminency, your sublime and wonderful Magnitude, your illustrious and magnificent Highness, &c.* By a philosophic observer the system of the Roman government might have been mistaken for a splendid theatre, filled with players of every character and degree, who repeated the language and imitated the passions of their original model."

Two years after the decease of Gregory, or A. D. 607, Boniface III. was elected Pope. He taking advantage of the personal enmity of the Emperor Phocas towards the then Bishop of Constantinople, obtained from him a revocation of the imperial decree that constituted that bishop Universal Patriarch, as stated at page 330, *and had it conferred on himself, and his successors in the Roman pontificate for the future*; which title Pope Gregory but a few years before had declared to be “*anti-christian, heretical, blasphemous, diabolical.*”

As it constitutes no part of my undertaking to expose the pitiful evasions to which the advocates of Papal supremacy have resorted, to avoid the conclusions to be deduced from the language used by Pope Gregory the Great, I shall say nothing on that subject. The reader will find the matter briefly and well disposed of in so common a book as *Bowers' Hist. of the Popes, Art. Boniface III.*

Though we have no reason to consider that the Bishop of Constantinople in assuming the title of Universal Patriarch meant any thing further than arrogating to himself a mere honorary title, implying precedence in point of ecclesiastical rank, yet Boniface III. had scarcely received the imperial decree vesting him with the title of *Universal Bishop*, and declaring him “the head of the church,” when he assembled a council of the bishops, presbyters and deacons then residing at Rome, and decreed with their concurrence, that no election of a bishop should henceforth be deemed lawful unless made by the people and clergy, approved by the prince or lord of the city, *and confirmed by the Pope, interposing his authority as head of the Holy Catholic Church, and Vicar of Jesus Christ; in virtue of being the successor of St. Peter, on whom Christ was asserted to have conferred plenary power and authority.* To establish this assumption, the Popes now urged with an almost irresistible force of reasoning, those celebrated texts of Scripture which have ever since been quoted as the foundations of Papal authority, such as *Math. xvi. 18, 19*, “Thou art Peter, (*i. e.* a rock,) and upon this rock I build my church,” &c. Also Christ’s words to Peter, *John xxi. 15—17*, “*Feed my sheep,*” which as having been reiterated three times, it was affirmed conveyed authority to him in a very emphatic manner.

I shall not undertake the confutation of the arguments based upon these texts of Scripture thus offered to Christendom for the first time to sustain the doctrine of Papal supremacy. They were not understood in such a sense in the earlier ages of Christianity, and the fact of the silence of Pope Gregory the Great on the sub-

ject, in his contest with the bishop of Constantinople, is of itself sufficient proof.* After the Popes had been recognized as the successors of St. Peter, and as such the head of the Holy Catholic Church, the Papal interpretation of the above texts had a prodigious influence on the minds of the Western christians in sustaining their assumption of possessing authority over all Christendom.†

From various causes the Popes were unable to induce the bishops and clergy of the Eastern or Greek Empire to acknowledge their authoritative supremacy; but in the Latin or Western Empire, where both clergy and laity already regarded the Pope as the most exalted bishop on earth, there was comparatively little

* Cyprian expressly said at the Council of Carthage, A. D. 256, "I may presume there is no one of our brethren who will assume to himself an episcopal authority over those of his own order, or to be a bishop of bishops," &c.

The Eastern bishops in their reply to Pope Julius concerning his reinstatement of Athanasius and Paul, A. D. 341, were equally distinct concerning the equality of all bishops.—*Sozomen, lib. iii. chap. 8.*

Thou art Peter, &c. was not applied either by Ambrose, Augustine, or Jerome, to the Bishop of Rome.—*Eurnet, Hist. Reform. i. 225; Michelet's France, i. 62.*

Even Roger of Wendover, who flourished about A. D. 1235, only understood the decree of Phocas as implying mere precedence of rank, for he says on the year A. D. 609, that "at the request of Boniface IV." (i. e. not by any inherent right,) "the Emperor Phocas decreed the Roman Church should be the head and mistress of all churches; for in times past the church of Constantinople styled herself the chief of all churches."

† This subject is forcibly illustrated by the following relation from Bede's *Eccles. Hist. lib. iii. chap. 25.* A controversy concerning the proper day upon which Easter was to be celebrated having arisen A. D. 661, between the English clergy and Wilfrid, who represented the Papal authority, he in answer to a reference to St. Columba as quoted by the English clergy, remarked, "If that Columba of yours was a holy man and powerful in miracles, yet is he to be preferred before the most blessed prince of the apostles, to whom our Lord said, 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, and to thee I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven.'

"When Wilfrid had spoken thus, the king," (before whom this controversy was conducted,) "said, Is it true, Colman, that these words were spoken to Peter by our Lord? He answered, *It is true, O king.* Then, says he, can you shew any such power given to your Columba. Colman answered, *None.* Then, added the king, do you both agree that these words were principally directed to Peter, and that the keys of heaven were given to him by our Lord? They both answered, *We do.* Then the king concluded; and I also say unto you, that he is the door-keeper, whom I will not contradict, but will as far as I am able in all things obey his decrees, *lest, when I come to the gates of the kingdom of heaven, there should be none to open them, he being my adversary who is proved to have the keys.*"

King Canute, in his Epistle from Rome, A. D. 1031, (*William of Malmesbury, lib. ii. chap. 11,*) says, "I have learned from the wise, that St. Peter the apostle has received from God great power in binding and loosing: that he carries the key of the kingdom of heaven; and consequently I have judged it matter of special importance to seek his influence with God;" i. e. by submitting to the Pope as Peter's successor.

difficulty. The Metropolitan bishops who foresaw the loss of their independence through the interference of the Popes in the appointment of ordinary bishops and clergy, offered a greater or less resistance; but ultimately the success of the Popes was completed by a dextrous management of the Metropolitans, through their own pride and ambition. After this time the Papal authority became universally recognized in the West, both by clergy and people, except in some small communities in the Alps and Pyrenees, who under the names of Waldenses, Cathari, Albigenses, &c. have survived even to the present time, and who during the middle ages exerted a silent but considerable influence in preserving the purity and simplicity of the christian religion, as well as preparing the way for the reformation, to a degree of which very few Protestants at the present time are aware.*

I cannot close this part of my discourse on the rise of the Bishops of Rome to ecclesiastical eminence as heads of the Catholic Church, without endeavoring to correct the very common Protestant misapprehension, which assumes that the Popes were wholly unprincipled in the exertions they made to obtain their exalted dignity. There is no reason whatever to suppose the earlier Popes had any doubts as to the validity of the claims they made, though they may have intrigued to obtain such a recognition. The doctrine of their pre-eminence over all other bishops, as being the asserted successors of St. Peter, was almost universally admitted after the third century by the Western clergy and people. The Popes therefore, in the fifth and sixth centuries, when elected to the Roman bishopric, only brought with them the belief which they had previously entertained as ecclesiastics. In process of time, by the suggestions of pride and ambition, their theory on the subject of Papal pre-eminence was enlarged from that of mere precedence in point of rank, to an actual supremacy in spiritual matters, in which particular, as in all other systems of will-worship, they deluded themselves in like manner as they misled others through their delusion. At a later period frauds of all kinds were made use of by certain of the Popes or clergy devoted to their interests. Such persons however, are not to be regarded as Catholics, but as Atheists, utter unbelievers in Christianity, who had

* For a history of the Waldenses and Albigenses, whose religious action during the middle ages involves a most important subject for Protestant consideration, see Alix. Remarks, Eccles. Hist. Albigenses and Waldenses. Gilly's Narrative. Gilly's Waldensian Research. Faber's Ancient Waldenses and Albigenses. Gibbon, Decl. and Fall. (Paulicians) chap. 54. McCries' Hist. Reform. in Italy, &c. in Spain: as well as the general works of Mosheim, Milner, Giesler, &c.

become ecclesiastics for mere selfish or worldly purposes. For among other evil consequences of church establishments, where dignities, wealth, and power, offer the means for the indulgence of ambition or voluptuousness, atheists and deists will ever be found ready to assume any appearance or function by which they may attain to the accomplishment of their desires.* That such persons in their official position should be supposed to have acted infallibly, as ministers of Christ; or that their supposed divine commission would sanctify acts of their hypocrisy in the administration of sacraments, or in transmitting the influences of the Holy Spirit, is only explainable by the utter delusion that invariably attends all systems of will-worship.

Neither must the reader fall into the error of supposing that the recognition of the Pope of Rome as Universal Bishop by the Emperor Phocas, was the actual cause of the exaltation of the Papal power. The Popes would have obtained their great authority though no imperial decree had been promulgated in their favor. Their supremacy was founded in the necessary development of the idea of a Holy Catholic Church, sustained by the immediate protection of Christ, which had already prevailed for centuries in the minds of all Christendom. Political considerations guaranteed the headship of the church to the bishop of Rome; if he had not succeeded to it, the office would have been conferred on the bishop of Constantinople. So consistent with the idea of a Holy Catholic Church, was the exaltation of some bishop or other *with papal authority* as its spiritual head, that I apprehend no reasoning or

* What atheists and deists have done in former times may be readily estimated by what they have done, or have recommended others to do in our own days. The following anecdote of Hume, the English historian, who has borne the best moral character among such classes of persons, is abundant proof of what was done by them when far greater inducements tempted their pride, ambition, or sensuality, to impose upon the simplicity of the christian world.

“*Late in life*, Hume was consulted by Colonel Edmonstone, *whether a young man who did not believe in the thirty-nine Articles, and who had no inclination for the church should go into orders.* (In other words a deist or atheist, for no other person would have consulted Hume on such a subject.) His reply was, “It is putting too great a respect on the vulgar, and on their superstitions to pique one’s self on sincerity with regard to them. Did ever one make it a point of honor to speak truth to children or madmen? If the thing were worthy of being treated gravely, I should tell him that the Pythian Oracle with the approbation of Xenophon advised every one to worship the gods,—*νόμῳ πολεμεῖς* (*i. e.* according to the custom of the place.) I wish it were still in my power to be a hypocrite in this particular. The common duties of society usually require it, and the ecclesiastical profession only adds a little more to an innocent dissimulation,—without which it is impossible to pass through the world.”—*Edinburgh Review, Art. David Hume, January, 1847.*

influence could have prevailed against it. It was a subject that could only be set aside by process of time, which would shew by a natural *reductio ad absurdum*, that the theory of a Holy Catholic Church was in itself untrue. Until that fallacy could be demonstrated by the injurious action of the Church itself, it was utterly impossible to convince the world that the superstructure erected on this foundation, was altogether contrary to the theory of Christianity as laid down by Christ and his apostles.

But the decree of the Emperor Phocas hastened the completion of the Papal development, by giving it at that time the highest and most authoritative approbation it could receive; and being thus sustained in its external exhibition, it only required the direct action of the Popes to elaborate the scheme of Christianity, thus corrupted, into a complete practical conformity with the universal belief that Christ had put the whole church under their immediate control.

INVESTIGATION

CONCERNING THE

DEVELOPMENTS OF CHRISTIANITY, FROM THE DOWNFALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE IN THE WEST, UNTIL THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION.

THOUGH the bishop of Rome had now attained to the most exalted position in the christian world, it was only in an ecclesiastical point of view. He was recognized in the West as the head of the hierarchy of Christendom, in like manner as the Jewish high priest was regarded to be the head of the Jewish church. In other respects the Pope was a subject of the Roman emperors. He was elected to his office by the people and clergy of the city of Rome, and his election required an express confirmation from the emperors at Constantinople, who were jealous of their prerogative in this particular, and who rigidly enforced it until the ultimate downfall of their authority in Italy. This necessarily terminated in the circumstance that the German barbarians gradually subjugated the Western Empire, and henceforth maintained their conquest by the establishment of a number of independent semi-barbarian kingdoms.

Through this great revolutionary change, the Popes were delivered from their immediate dependence upon the imperial court at Constantinople, but their condition in other respects was greatly affected for the worse, for they now were surrounded by semi-barbarian nations of rude military conquerors, without established laws or forms of civil governments; who though they were to a considerable degree half christianized, were generally Arians, and as such theologically opposed to the Popes as the head of the opposite doctrine.

From these circumstances the further development of papal authority, after the commencement of the seventh century, was for a considerable time exceedingly repressed; but as the Popes did ultimately prevail over all opposing difficulties, it is a subject of the deepest interest to comprehend in what manner that spiritual triumph was accomplished, which resulted in a complete dominion over the understanding and consciences of mankind for a period of eight hundred years, or until the outbreak of the Reformation in A. D. 1517.

A correct appreciation of the intellectual, moral, and social condition of things that ensued in Europe, from the subversion of the Western Roman Empire until the Reformation, is as essential a matter in the history of the Christian Dispensation, as is the relation of any historical particulars concerning the Jewish Dispensation. This subject hitherto has not been properly estimated by religious Protestants. They have generally regarded it as a mere matter of civil history, that involved a multitude of perplexed details, which few persons deemed of sufficient importance to resolve into intelligible points of view.

It is however impossible to separate the development of Christianity from the civil or the intellectual history of Europe. Christianity, so far from being an independent system of moral or social development, has been entirely controlled by political agencies, and like a tree growing in an ungenial locality has been forced to accommodate its growth according to the adverse circumstances under which it has been placed.

The importance of comprehending the political condition of things, from the time of the subversion of the Western Roman Empire down to our present time, can be easily appreciated from the simple fact of the rise and domination of the Popes. The church of Rome had no power by which the human mind could be controlled beyond that of opinion, and consequently could only have obtained her eminent position because that opinion was favorable to her assumptions. When we therefore know that kings, nobles and people, sustained the church in all her pretensions, and punished schismatics and heretics from her communion by death, it becomes a matter of the deepest interest to comprehend how the church of Rome obtained this wonderful influence, and by what means she was enabled to preserve her dominion for so long a period of time.

The history of Europe during the middle ages, so far as may be necessary to our purposes, may be made very intelligible by considering the subject under the light afforded by the exposition of a

few principles that controlled human development during those periods of time.

It does not fall within our province to enumerate the more immediate causes of the decline of the Roman Empire, this information must be sought in the writings of Gibbon, Sismondi, Guizot, and others, who have treated formally on the subject. We shall merely regard the actual condition of things that existed when the Empire itself fell.

At the time the German barbarians invaded the Western Empire, the Roman people, however oppressed and exhausted by the imperial despotism, were still living in the enjoyment of a high degree of civilization. A numerous population consisting of many millions were engaged in agriculture, thousands were employed in various arts and manufactures, while a large body of traders or merchants carried all the conveniences and comforts of civilized life to every part of the Empire. There was a dense population in many provinces, and in all an industrious people, who though wretchedly misgoverned were still able to support themselves and families by their labor and enterprise, as directed towards those objects of remuneration or wealth that ordinarily are found in connection with all civilized countries.

They were also christians according to the standard of the times, and as such held with firm belief all the dogmas of the church of Rome according to the metaphysical orthodoxy of the first four councils, and fully believing their clergy had a divine authority to remit sins in this life, and to procure them the everlasting happiness of heaven through the means of sacraments, prayers and masses.

Such was the general condition of the subjects of the Roman Empire when it was invaded by the German barbarians, who henceforth occupied the subject provinces as military conquerors. The numerous millions of Roman subjects engaged in agriculture, manufactures and commerce, thus became subjected to rude barbarians, who through downright ignorance of civil institutions, and the oppressions of mere military commanders, gradually reduced the previously existing state of Roman civilization down to almost the lowest conditions of social existence short of actual barbarism. We must state however that the Germans, who had been pressing upon the Roman frontiers for several centuries before they subverted the Western Empire, had through this contact become familiarized to a considerable degree with Roman civilization. Many individuals among them had under the same influences be-

come half christianized. They also had been largely employed in the Roman armies, where under Roman officers they had acquired much of their military discipline. Therefore, when they subverted the authority of the Roman emperors, notwithstanding the violence and rapacity with which it was effected, they never proposed to themselves the destruction of the Roman people or their institutions. They had conquered only that they might possess themselves of those desirable things that civilization exhibited on all sides around them, and hence the forms and institutions of the Roman Empire were still preserved in a greater or less degree.

Neither did the Germans subvert the Roman Empire in a mere tumultuous barbarian invasion, but as nations of warriors under military organization, in which they distinctly recognized different grades of rank among their commanders, and the subordination of all to a king or supreme leader.

This principle of the military subordination of the common soldiers to their chiefs, and of these to their general, king, or commander-in-chief, constituted the only bond of union among the German conquerors; for they had scarcely any rule or principle of law to regulate their conduct towards each other, beyond those broad principles of natural equity, whose force is perceived among mankind even in the lowest degrees of social intercourse.

It must also be remembered, that the constitution of the German armies at these times was entirely different from that of our own. Instead of individual mercenaries organized into companies and regiments under officers not selected by themselves, the German armies consisted of a number of bands of indefinite, though comparatively small numbers of warriors of the most free and independent character, who voluntarily attached themselves to some chieftain of military reputation, upon romantic notions of personal attachment that united them whether for life or death with their chief. He on his part was equally bound in honor to manifest a similar regard for the prosperity and welfare of his adherents. This characteristic feature of the German warriors, was noticed some centuries before this time by Tacitus, in his account of the German people: it was preserved among them during their fusion with the conquered subjects of the Roman Empire, and thus became durably impressed afterwards on the civilization of modern Europe. It was this principle that gave rise to that feeling of personal attachment on the part of the people, to their local nobility or kings which is now known by the name of loyalty, *i. e.* a personal rever-

ence for the noble or king independent of any other consideration than that he is their true lord or king.

When these chieftains and their immediate retainers, after the conquest of the Western Empire, made their settlements in the subjugated provinces, they still continued closely united, and located themselves in favorable situations where their national feelings and prejudices were preserved in all their intensity. The chief occupied or built a castle, and his retainers settled around him in various capacities, some attended on him constantly in personal service, while others cultivated the adjacent lands, yet all considered themselves under the most stringent obligation to accompany their chief in his military enterprises, whether against their common enemies or against the bordering nobles, who from the loose manner in which their respective settlements had been made, were ever at variance with each other concerning their several boundaries or privileges.

These military chieftains thus established throughout the various provinces of the conquered Empire, gradually became petty despots in their several territories with unlimited authority over the lives and persons of their retainers, who as gradually had sunk down from being freemen to the most abject condition. Though our modern historians have been exceedingly perplexed to understand how this state of things was brought about, the cause I apprehend was very simple and intelligible. It arose as the effect of that long continued military organization which was essentially necessary to their security. If they had relaxed their military discipline in the earlier occupation of the conquered provinces, they would have lost whatever they had acquired in the combination of their strength, and would have been but so many individual foreigners in the midst of resentful and vindictive enemies.

In consequence therefore, of this condition of things, the subordination of military discipline lasted during many generations, until a fusion had been effected between the conquerors and the conquered races. In the mean time the chieftains who were hereditary in their positions, gradually required and received from their adherents, an implicit submission to their will in all other matters as well as those of military obedience: for it was soon ascertained that whenever the chief became offended with an individual, he could revenge himself through his power of requiring military subordination. He could thus punish the refractory in the most remorseless manner for any real or pretended breach of military

discipline.* He could harrass them with unceasing services; he could delay or refuse to assist them when in the utmost peril; or finally, he could order those he hated to undertake the most desperate enterprises. At the same time he could confer every favor upon those subservient to his caprice. As this condition of things lasted a long time, so when the necessity of military organization ceased, the retainers and vassals by habit, prescription, regard to self-interests, and amalgamation with the conquered races, had become not only familiarized to an implicit submission to their feudal chiefs, but they had also become ignorant of any other form of political organization.

The same necessity of coherence as already mentioned, preserved a military organization among the chieftains, who perceived they could only maintain their conquests by mutual assistance. The proud and independent chief of a small band of retainers, therefore readily acknowledged his military subordination to some more powerful chieftain, who under the name of count or duke could require in time of war his presence and that of his followers. The counts and dukes in like manner acknowledged their subordination to the king or feudal suzerain, and that they were bound to place their military array under his command whenever summoned for that purpose.

In short the feudal system that gradually arose in Europe, was the result of the mere military occupation of the Western Empire by the German nations, who in the division of the conquered country preserved a military coherence with each other on the distinct perception that they could only in this manner retain their conquests. The principle of military subordination was therefore, rigidly maintained through the observance of various customs, and homages of inferiors to superiors, until they ascended to the lord paramount; though it sometimes happened that the vassal lord was in point of wealth and number of retainers more powerful than his feudal suzerain, and with whom he was often at open war.

* This mode of proceeding was exhibited very significantly by Clovis, king of the Franks. He had on a certain occasion desired to obtain a silver vase plundered from a christian church, in order to restore it to the clergy: his request however, was bluntly refused by a soldier who told him that he must be contented with the share of the spoil allotted to him, and that he should have nothing more. Clovis in consequence of this independent spirit of his soldier, was obliged to submit to the denial; but shortly after at a public review of his troops, on finding or pretending to find some fault as to the manner in which the offending soldier's arms had been kept, he struck him dead with his battle axe, reminding him at the same time of the vase at Soissons.

Feeble as the tie was between the king and his great lords, it nevertheless contained the principle of monarchical government, and ultimately led to the abolition of the feudal system, the most cruel and oppressive condition of things ever witnessed in Europe, and to which monarchy was an auspicious event as concerned the future happiness and intellectual improvement of mankind.

But for several centuries before kings prevailed over their feudal nobility, these last in their respective domains however limited, exercised absolute power over the lives and liberties of their vassals. They were engaged in continual wars not only with one another, but often against their kings, and thus filled Europe with all kinds of rapine and violence.*

During this distressing state of things the ancient Roman population, however much they might writhe under the bondage to which they had been reduced, had no alternative but to submit. They were intermingled every where with small condensed settlements of their barbarian conquerors, who were ever prepared on the least appearance of resistance to crowd together under their different leaders, and crush any opposition that might seem to endanger their usurped dominion.

The lapse of time however gradually accomplished a fusion of the conquering and conquered races. The small properties in land held by the former could not be made hereditary, and were therefore gradually absorbed into the possessions of the feudal lords, while intermarriages with the conquered race continually rendered the distinctions between them less perceptible. The gradual result was the formation of a new people, characterized by peculiar insti-

* In reference to this state of things Michelet (*Hist. France* i. chap. 4) makes the following observations: "Our prosaic plains of Brie and Hurepoix have had their Iliads. The Monfarts and the Garandes often supported the king, while the Coucys, the barons of Rochefort, and especially the lords of Puiset, were arrayed against him. They troubled the whole neighborhood with their rapine. There was some possibility of going in safety from Paris to St. Deny's, (about six miles,) but beyond, one could only ride lance in rest, for here was the sombre and unlucky forest of Montmorency, while on the other side, the tower of Montherey exacted the tolls. The king could not travel from his city of Orleans to his city of Paris, (sixty milcs,) without an army at his back."

Nothing was sacred before the feudal nobles, as might be anticipated from the possessors of absolute power. Even so late as A. D. 1046, Sweyne, eldest son of the famous Earl Godwin, having violated the person of Edgiva, *abbess of Leominster*, the only penalty the king could inflict on him was banishment. Sweyne then turned pirate, and lived for some time by his depredations. After a while he was reconciled to the king, but having then committed an atrocious murder, he once more forsook the kingdom, and yet in a short time was forgiven and received by his sovereign.—*Lingard Hist. England*, chap. vi.

tutions, language and laws, conformable in its external character to the impress given by the conquering race. For while the fusion was taking place, the mass was moulded by the superior influence of kings and nobles, who being hereditary in their possessions, chiefly intermarried among themselves, and remained unaffected in their personal feelings and interests during the amalgamation of the people. Indeed the kings and nobles obtained from that circumstance greater authority, for as the fusion was effected under the influence of the dominant race, so the resentments of the conquered people gradually became extinguished, and ultimately the whole population settled down under the absolute despotism of feudal institutions.

But while the amalgamation of the conquering with the conquered races was taking place, the intellectual as well as numerical influence of the ancient Roman population prevailed to a great degree over the barbarian and semi-heathen portion. This might not only be anticipated from the superior excellence of the scheme of Christianity, which even the rudest people could comprehend, but in an especial manner from the vast influence exerted upon them through the ecclesiastical corruptions of those times, when the christian clergy were regarded as persons empowered of God to absolve mankind from their sins, who conferred divine grace through sacraments administered *opera operata*, whose prayers and masses afforded relief in purgatory, and which would ultimately bring all devout christians to the everlasting enjoyment of heaven.

It is therefore very intelligible how the christian clergy gradually brought under their spiritual control, all classes of men from the peasant to the king, for as all must die and encounter the mysterious conditions of the future world, under that universal apprehension that all men shall be hereafter judged of God according to their deeds; so the conscious guilt of the proud, licentious and cruel feudal kings and nobles, continually induced them to seek the spiritual intervention of christian clergymen, as security against their anticipation of future judgment.

In the first instance the influence of the christian clergy upon the Germans, was divided between the ecclesiastics of the Catholic Church, and their own clergy, who were in the general Arians, and who in the greater favor they may have enjoyed among their own countrymen, thus constituted a sore trial to the spiritual pride and bigotry of the Catholic clergy and their adherents, who regarded them as enemies of the true faith. Hence after the kings of the martial and powerful Frank confederacy, then heathens, became

converts to the Catholic faith, a compact followed between them and the Catholic clergy through which each assisted the other to accomplish their respective objects. The Catholic Church encouraged and assisted the Franks to invade and conquer the Arian kingdoms, and the Franks in their turn recognized the Catholic Church to be the only true church, and which it was their religious duty to sustain and cherish. In the ultimate conquest of Gaul by the Franks, and their great influence on the adjacent kingdoms, the consequence was that the Catholic clergy gradually became universally established as being the true servants of God throughout nearly all Europe.

The importance of the position attained by the Catholic Church at this time, is only to be appreciated by comprehending the details of its more important assumptions. The pope and the clergy were now recognized as having supreme control of every particular pertaining to morals and religion, under their supposed divine commission from God. The Pope, as the vicar of Jesus Christ upon earth, stood vested with plenary powers to dispense with all human oaths and obligations, to absolve men from all sin after due penitence, and finally to deliver them from those fires of purgatory to which every one was liable after death. It must be therefore evident that the recognition of these great spiritual powers on the part of the kings and people of Europe, must necessarily place the popes in a position which interfered with every action of human nature from those of the king on his throne, down to those of the meanest serf. The inevitable consequence of such exaltation must be, that sooner or later there would be a contest between the popes and the kings of Europe concerning supremacy; for the moral or religious acts of kings like those of their subjects, lay open to the approval or condemnation of the pope as the vicar of Jesus Christ. If the kings of Europe yielded the popes this authority, these last necessarily became supreme; if the kings refused to submit, they then became rebellious to him, to whom Jesus Christ had given authority as his vicar.

As soon therefore as the existence of the Catholic Church was secured among the states founded by the Germans and Franks, a struggle commenced, not for power in its immediate sense, but between the intellectual and moral principles involved in the agencies of the church, and the mere brute force of the feudal chieftains, such as we have exhibited them in a preceding page. This contest may be more clearly appreciated as comprehending the operation of the following antagonistic principles.

On the one hand the political institutions of Europe were represented in an innumerable number of fiefs, countships, dukedoms, differing in local usages and arbitrary customs, under the sway of despotic and capricious lords, who in their misrule either reduced their vassals to poverty and personal degradation, or harrassed them to the utmost by their continual wars and incursions into each other's territories.

On the other hand the church existed an extensive hierarchical organization of the best educated men of the age, whose action however corrupt was based upon the scheme of Christianity, which exhibited a most admirable system of moral obligation, humanity and justice, irrespective of any difference between the king or the peasant, and which required the conscientious discharge of all human duties, under the denunciation of future judgment on the part of Almighty God. The moral influence of such a system was still more forcibly impressed upon the rude comprehension of the men of that day, by their implicit belief that the clergy could absolve them when penitent, from the guilt of their transgressions, while those who neglected their ministry would be irrecoverably condemned to everlasting torments.

The church furthermore received all classes of men into her bosom, no matter how humble their birth, and if they had intellectual capacities she educated and promoted them to prominent places in the hierarchy. The church thus obtained the assistance of the more intellectually capable men throughout the whole community, while the feudal kings and nobles had no other intellectual strength or assistance, but what might happen to be found in their own limited privileged class.

Though we of the present day readily perceive the vast intellectual and moral superiority of the Catholic Church at these times, as contrasted with the authority of kings and princes in their political establishments, yet neither the clergy nor the kings then had any comprehension of the subject, and did not dream of any future antagonism between them. Kings and nobles were in the actual possession of power and wealth, the clergy in a temporal point of view were poor, and helpless, and regarded kings and princes as their protectors. These last however looked with reverence upon the clergy as the divinely commissioned ministers of the Almighty, who were exclusively devoted to the service of God in a continual round of prayers, vigils, fastings, visiting the sick and dying, and offering them the consolations of religion. That the clergy might be wholly dedicated to these functions of their ministry, they had

renounced the world and all its pomps and pleasures, they not only held no possessions but made vows of voluntary poverty, and lived on the charity of religious laymen. Many among the secular clergy were married, but the majority regarded matrimony as being inconsistent with the clerical function, since it entangled their affections with worldly concerns, instead of being wholly employed in the service of God and his saints.

The clergy thus abstracted from all worldly interests, and at the same time possessing the vast spiritual powers attributed to them, every day increased in personal esteem and reverence among the laity. The poorer classes gave them food and whatever else they could afford from their scanty means, while the rich and noble either through superstitious piety, or else that they might atone for past sin, built churches, chapels, convents and other religious edifices for the accommodation of the servants of God, in which they might be able to perform their religious services in comfort and security, under ample provision made for them by donations of land or money.

This continual enrichment of the clergy, and extension of their temporal importance, however, was not done from any view towards exalting the influence or power of the Holy Catholic Church, as regarded in the universal sense. Each king or nobleman only contemplated a local purpose in the establishment of the ministers of religion in their dominions or on their estates. They merely anticipated by such acts either present blessings from heaven, or the ultimate salvation of their souls, and those of their families and future posterity. Hence for the most part, the beneficed clergy were bound to offer up for ever, continual masses for the souls of the founders and those of their descendants.

The kings and nobles therefore considered themselves, and were regarded by the clergy, as being patrons and defenders of the various religious establishments made by them, and as such they exercised the right or influence by which they presented any ecclesiastic they might prefer, to the bishopric or convent founded or enlarged by their munificence. This influence was very naturally exercised by them. They had nothing to do with the preparation or qualifications of clergymen; that matter belonged exclusively to the bishops who only could ordain them, and the reasonable presumption was they would ordain none but suitable persons for the exercise of the ministry. If this was the case, and none doubted it, it was the natural privilege of the king, nobleman, or other lay patron, to select the individual he might prefer out of the ecclesiastic-

tical body, to be the bishop of a diocese, or superior of a religious establishment founded by him or his ancestors, and who protected them against any danger to which they might be exposed.

In short, the temporal power and wealth of the church came from and was continually increased by successive generations of kings and nobles, who were regarded with great admiration by the clergy as being the patrons and defenders of the church. They therefore exercised the greatest influence both direct and indirect upon all external ecclesiastical arrangements, and indeed without their interference and protection, the church could scarcely have retained any of their temporalities in these troublous times. This fact was so well understood in that day, that when a bishop died, his ring, crozier, &c. was immediately carried to the sovereign, that he might confer them again upon the individual selected by him as the successor to the deceased bishop.

Neither was the protection of kings and princes confined to the clergy in their several dominions, they continually fought the battles of the papal church wherever they had the ability. In this manner the Popes in the most humble manner sought the protection of Pepin and Charlemagne against the Lombards, and to secure the future protection of these warlike princes they made themselves their subjects. Thus in the year A. D. 800, the Pope, clergy, people and barons of Rome elected Charlemagne to be Emperor of the Romans, conceding to him every privilege or prerogative that had heretofore been enjoyed by the Roman Emperors at Constantinople. By this election the Popes became subjects of the German Emperors, and were incapable of being consecrated as Popes until their election had been confirmed by them. The people of Rome also in their oath of allegiance bound themselves not to consent to the consecration of a Pope, until he should have taken in the presence of the commissioners of the Emperor, "an oath as Pope Eugenius the Second prescribed of his own accord for the safety and welfare of all" (parties.)*—*Bowers' Hist. Popes*, ii. 203.

As might be anticipated from the universal history of human nature, the wealth and influence thus obtained by the clergy had a very deteriorating effect upon their lives and morals. Hence the devout and religious portion of the dignified clergy of those times

* The Popes were not declared to be independent of the Emperors of Germany as lords paramount, until A. D. 1355, when Charles the Fourth acknowledged the absolute independence of the Pope as a temporal prince, in virtue of a previous compact between the Pope and himself by which he obtained the imperial crown. Until this time, the Popes had been vassals of the Empire.—*Court of Rome*, 167.

appear to have exerted themselves strenuously towards correcting this injurious condition of things, as is evident from the multiplied enactments of provincial councils in various parts of Europe, forbidding the luxury and worldly habits of the clergy. Their efforts however had few if any results, for the root of the evil was in the wealth and dignities of the clergy, and the abuse of such things it was wholly impossible to restrain, when the standard of ecclesiastical morals was continually lowering through the intercourse that existed between the richly beneficed clergy and the licentious and profligate kings and nobles of that period of time.*

The reverence, power and wealth to which the more dignified clergymen had gradually attained through the munificent liberality of preceding times, ultimately made princes and nobles fully sensible of the importance and desirable position of those who enjoyed ecclesiastical dignities; and having for the most part a right to present, or effect the election of such persons as they might prefer, they gradually availed themselves of their privilege to introduce their own children, relatives, or personal friends into the ecclesiastical body. Such persons, when of sufficient age, or else having obtained through money or influence a dispensation from the Popes, were then put into the possession of rich benefices or bishoprics without any regard either to their age or moral qualifications. The simplicity and holiness of Christianity was consequently exceedingly degraded by the voluptuous and irreligious lives of these ignorant noble ecclesiastics, who nevertheless in virtue of their dignities were to a great degree the rulers and directors of the christian world.†

* Geoffrey, a bastard son of Henry II. of England, while a youth was appointed archdeacon of Lincoln, and in the twentieth year of his age by royal mandate was elected bishop of that see. For a considerable time under favor of a papal dispensation, he enjoyed the temporalities without having been consecrated, or even admitted into holy orders. On a rebellion breaking out Geoffrey raised a large military force, displayed great personal prowess, took several castles, and was of essential service in quelling the insurrection.

Though, as a soldier, Geoffrey obtained great reputation, he was very deficient in his duty as a churchman, and after being seven years a bishop, he still refused to become a priest. In the year A. D. 1181, the Pope sent a mandate to the Archbishop of Canterbury requiring Geoffrey to either be ordained or to renounce his bishopric. He preferred the latter course, and was then made by his father Chancellor of England.—*Campbell's Lives, Chancellors*, i. 98.

† "Every provident father," says Michelet, speaking of these times, (*Hist. of France*, i. 193,) "secures a bishopric or an abbey for his younger sons. They make their serfs elect their infant children to the greatest ecclesiastical sees. An Archbishop, only six years of age, mounts a table, stammers out a word or two of his catechism, is elected, takes upon him the cure of souls, and governs an ecclesiastical

The control of these rich possessions of the church, and the dignities attached to them, ultimately led to those violent contests between the Popes and the Kings of Europe which so eminently characterized the history of the middle ages, and which we shall now endeavor to lay before our readers in their important bearing on the development of human society under christian institutions.

Notwithstanding the corrupting influences that we have just stated were steadily working to the moral degradation of the Catholic Church, her theoretic constitution was so perfectly elaborated in its perversity, that there was a continual exaltation of the functions of the several orders of the ecclesiastical ministry; and especially so of the Pope as being the Vicar of Christ upon earth. In virtue of the position thus conceded him from all parts of Christian Europe, he was continually required by appeals from kings and princes to determine the justice or reasonableness of their conflicting claims, for the sanction of Papal approbation in these times was almost universally considered to be tantamount to the approbation of the Almighty. It is not wonderful therefore that the Popes, under the references made to them according to such high ascriptions, should be gradually led to assume through their lofty position authority over emperors and kings. Furthermore, the iniquities of these rulers of the earth were eminent at these times, and the feelings and prejudices of all thinking persons sustained the Papal assumption, as exercising a control over those whom nothing else could restrain.

None of the Popes prior to Gregory VII. in A. D. 1075, claimed any direct right to interfere with the civil administration of the various kings of Europe, indeed they had always taught mankind that kings held their authority immediately from God under a perverse construction of *Romans* xiii. 1, 2, and that it was sinful to resist them. All this concession however signified nothing when the Popes assumed the right to censure kings and princes in any matter that in their estimation involved immoralities, or breaches of ecclesiastical regulations. Such power on the part of the Popes enabled them to interpret any act of the monarch or his nobles just

province. The father sells benefices in his name, receives the tithes and the prices of masses, though forgetting to have them said. He drives his vassals to confession, and compelling them to make their wills and leave their property, will ye nill ye, gathers the inheritance. He smites the people with the spiritual sword as with the arm of flesh, and alternately fights and excommunicates, slays and damns at pleasure."

The same practices continued in the Catholic Church down to the Reformation. See D'Aubigné, vol. i. 422.

as it might please them to regard it. But though Gregory VII. was the first who openly asserted the authority of the Popes to dethrone kings, yet the way to this assumption had been fully prepared for him by the indirect principles assumed by his predecessors. Thus when a bishop excused himself to Pope Nicholas I. (A. D. 864) for having complied with the king of France upon a matter disapproved by the Pope, on the ground that he had submitted to the king agreeably to the injunction of the apostle, (1 Peter ii. 13, &c.) "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, *whether it be to the king as supreme,*" &c. the Pope after approving the saying of the apostle, then remarked, (*Bowers' Hist. Popes, Nicholas I.*) "See whether the princes and kings to whom you submit be *really princes and kings: whether they govern themselves well, and likewise their subjects;* for to whom will he be good who is not good to himself. *See whether they have a right to the title of princes,* otherwise we ought to look upon them *as tyrants* rather than princes and kings; and instead of submitting to them, *resist and oppose them, since we cannot submit to them without favoring their vices.* Submit therefore to the king as supreme, or as exceeding all *by his virtues,* and not *by his vices,* and submit to him *for the Lord's sake* as the apostle commands, *and not against the Lord.*"

The exercise of powers thus indirectly claimed by Pope Nicholas, must if not resisted, sooner or later give them absolute authority over kings and princes, for if these last would not comply with the injunctions of the Popes, they became obnoxious to the charge of being bad men, tyrants, and not true princes, and as such were to be considered unworthy of sovereignty. The papal doctrine however was very cautiously brought forward by partial and indirect action, but gradually as well as unconsciously to the parties themselves, that intellectual and political struggle commenced between the Popes and the kings of Europe for the mastery of the world, which continued with alternate triumphs and defeats of the respective parties until the commencement of the fourteenth century, when the Papacy was completely humbled in a final contest with Philip the Fair, of France.

As it would be impossible for us to investigate in detail the subject of the gradual rise of the Popes to their exalted position in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries, I will only take up the general consideration of the subject in its connection with the pontificate of Gregory the Seventh, at which time this Pope broadly

assumed power over the kings of the earth, either to exalt or depose them.

When Gregory the Seventh was elected to the Papacy, (A. D. 1073,) the church at large throughout Christendom was in a state of great corruption, profligacy and disorder, whether as concerned the clergy or the laity. This condition of things was grievously deplored by the Pope as a truly pious and devout man, according to the theory of Christianity in his time, and as he possessed great intellectual capacity combined with energy of character, he resolutely determined to use his authority in establishing a reformation, which should not only correct the disorders among the clergy, but which should place the church in all respects upon what he considered to be her truly divine foundation.

So far as could be attempted by direct legislation upon the vices or misconduct of the clergy, Gregory boldly commenced by excommunicating every clergyman guilty of simony by the purchase of his benefice. He next excommunicated all those who were either married, or who kept concubines in their houses, as being alike contrary to the canons of the church, which required celibacy from all its ministers on the evident principle that it would detach them more entirely from the world, and make them more exclusively devoted to the interests of the church and religion. As many of the clergy were married, and great numbers maintained concubines, this decree excited great opposition and hatred to the Pope. But however he may be censured for his proceeding in the view of Protestants, yet Gregory's conduct was strictly in accordance with the doctrine of the Catholic Church, and it is altogether unfair to judge him by any other principle than the rule which he considered to be of divine institution, and by which his conscience was directed in attempting to reform the abuses of his age.

In the next place, Gregory clearly saw that no reformation could be effectual among the clergy, as long as kings and nobles had the power to bestow the dignities and rich benefices of the church upon individuals selected by themselves. This they did continually without the smallest regard to moral character or qualification, and indeed for the most part by selling them to the highest bidder. Gregory therefore seeing no other way by which he could remedy these abuses, undertook to challenge the right of kings and princes to dispose of ecclesiastical dignities and benefices, on the plea that such matters pertained exclusively to the disposition of the holy see, and to threaten with excommunication all temporal princes who should henceforth act contrary to his decree on the subject.

This assumption of Gregory was a most outrageous disregard of the rights of princes and nobles, for however absurd it may seem that ecclesiastical offices and dignities should be disposed of by laymen, yet their right was founded simply on the fact, that they merely selected among *the clergy, ordained and consecrated by the church*, such individuals as they might prefer to place over the sees, abbeys, convents, &c. that had been established, endowed, and enriched by their ancestors or by themselves. Gregory's proper course ought to have been to have degraded every clergyman who was unfit for the clerical office, and then no mischief could have ensued by a lay proprietor selecting one according to the right his family had possessed for centuries.

The kings and nobles of Europe, who had ever exercised this right of presentation to ecclesiastical benefices or dignities, and by which in the corruptions of the age, they either enriched themselves or rewarded their obsequious dependents whether lay or clerical, were not to be deterred from the exercise of such an important branch of their prerogative through a mere arbitrary Papal denunciation, went on therefore as heretofore, continually adding new scandals to the church that Gregory so vehemently desired to purify and reform. Bold and uncompromising in his character, and fully persuaded of the righteousness of his purpose, the Pope did not hesitate to act in the full sense of those powers that he considered were conferred on him as the successor of St. Peter and the vicar of Christ. "As our Saviour," said he, (*Bowers' Hist. Popes*, ii. 386,) "did not except kings, when he granted to St. Peter and in him to his successors, the power of binding and loosening, *why may not kings be bound and loosened, be excommunicated and absolved by him (i. e. Peter) and his successors, as well as the meanest of their subjects.*" The reasoning was so correct according to the premises, that Gregory proceeded to excommunicate and depose kings for their contumacy to the requirements of the vicar of Christ, and the christian world to a very considerable extent sustained the act of the Pope.

When we consider what the theory of the Catholic Church was at this time concerning the authority of the Pope, and that the Popes undoubtedly had the advantage in point of religious consistency concerning the subject of controversy, it seems rather more wonderful that they did not obtain universal dominion, than that their success was so comparatively partial; for notwithstanding the exaggerated statements given by ecclesiastical historians on the subject, the Popes during the highest period of their grandeur

obtained only a partial triumph, and were far more frequently defeated in their contests with the kings of Europe than successful in their assumptions.

The explanation of the imperfect success of the Popes, and ultimate failure of their dream of universal dominion, proceeded from that very theory of the Holy Catholic Church to which they owed their exaltation, and which like every other system of human devisement, contained the very principle of its own destruction. Thus, though the theory of the Holy Catholic Church had been elaborated in every particular of construction so as to seem perfect in its institution, it had ever been accompanied by the apparent anomaly, that priests, bishops, popes, &c. from time to time occasionally had violated every principle of morality and religion, and shewed themselves to be utterly vicious and profligate.*

To remedy this apparent impeachment of that Holy Catholic Church with whom Christ was asserted to be always present in all their acts and ministry, as conveying salvation to his faithful people,—the clergy maintained, that the promise of Christ, the sanctity of the sacraments, the absolution given by the priest, and the decrees of the Pope in his official capacity, were wholly unaffected by the personal character of the individual. This doctrine they sustained by asserting that the immoralities of the Jewish priests did not interfere with their sacred functions, that Caiaphas though he iniquitously condemned Christ to death, yet prophesied at the same time by the influence of the Holy Ghost, (*John xi. 51,*) and that even among the apostles themselves there was a traitor and wicked man in Judas Iscariot.† The fallacy of this reasoning we will confute hereafter on a more suitable occasion.

* From the nature of my work I cannot go into details on these subjects, I will therefore only give an example of the state of things so early as the year A. D. 1033, from Berrington, (a Catholic priest.) *Lit. Hist. Mid. Ages*, 147.

“The Roman see was unworthily occupied for many years; particularly by Benedict IX. who was called to it by the venal Romans when he had not completed his tenth year; but whose votes the treasures of his family had purchased. The writers of the age dwell with malevolent complacency on the vices of this infant pontiff, and he continued to increase in profligacy, till, unwilling any longer to bear the insult, the same people drove him from their city, and taking another bribe, elected the bishop of Sabinum in his place. This election also was soon annulled; when “as there was not,” says Baronius, “in the Roman Church a man fit to occupy its first station,” a German was nominated,” &c.

Those who may desire further details as to the profligacy of the Popes at these times will find abundant information in Bowers’ Hist. of the Popes.

Cardinal Bellarmine acknowledges, says Tillotson, (*Serm. 89,*) “that for a succession of fifty Popes together, there was not one pious or virtuous man that sat in that chair.

† This doctrine is expressly urged by Roger of Wendover, who flourished A. D. 1235, in his mention of Pope Gregory VII. in the Chronicle for A. D. 1074. After

But however useful these explanations were in shewing that an immoral and profligate clergy was not inconsistent with the existence of the Holy Catholic Church, the doctrine was capable of being turned against the clergy. Thus Henry IV. Emperor of Germany, who was more especially assailed by Gregory VII. immediately charged him with being an unprincipled monk who had obtained his Papal elevation by bribery and corruption, that he practised magic, invoked the assistance of the devil, and sought personal aggrandisement by throwing all things into confusion by exciting inferiors against their superiors. The consequence was that the Emperor having assembled a council of bishops, who were his creatures, they excommunicated and deposed Gregory as being unworthy of the Papacy, and then elected as Pope, Guibert bishop of Ravenna who took the name of Pope Clement III.

Gregory on his part excommunicated and deposed Henry IV. and selected a new Emperor in his place, which matter was laid hold of by his turbulent princes and nobles to justify their insubordination to him. Thus a war arose between the Popes and Emperors which lasted one hundred and fifty years,* and after having caused a vast effusion of human blood, terminated ultimately in a compromise between the Emperor and the Pope, that substantially left the power of investiture, *i. e.* of conferring benefices, in the hands of kings and princes as heretofore.

From this brief exposition of this famous contest between the Emperors and Popes concerning the right of conferring investitures, the reader can understand that though nothing was more firmly impressed upon the minds of all Christendom than that the Pope was the vicar of Jesus Christ upon earth, and as such the divine head of the Holy Catholic Church, yet no one denied but that the Pope as well as any other ecclesiastic might be personally a wicked man, since they were infallible only in their official capacities. But then it followed as a reasonable consequence, that when they were shewn to be wicked men, that then they ought to be

stating Gregory's proceedings, Roger remarks, that the conduct of the Pope, "seemed to many an inconsiderate judgment, as being against the opinion of the holy fathers, who have written that the sacraments belonging to the church, *viz.* baptism, unction, and sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, had by the invisible co-operation of the spirit, the same effect when dispensed in the church of God by evil men, as if dispensed by good men, and that as the spirit mysteriously quickens them, they are neither strengthened by the merits of the good, (*priest*) nor weakened by the sins of the bad."

* The first dispute concerning investitures was apparently terminated forty-seven years after its commencement. But the quarrel in fact was revived under other pretexts, and lasted, as stated in the text, above one hundred and fifty years.

deposed, and a truly pious person should be elected in his place. This doctrine opened a clear way by which the kings and princes of the earth could assail the Popes as effectually as the Popes could assail the kings; for if a king was disqualified as a temporal sovereign, by his vices, it was but just to eject a *wicked Pope* from his position, as head of the christian church.

By the exhibition of the facts as to the light in which the function of the Pope and other ecclesiastics was regarded as being unconnected with the personal character of the individual, we can easily comprehend how kings, nobles and people reposed with the most perfect assurance of belief upon the absolution, sacraments, and dispensations given by the Popes or the clergy, for however profligate or vicious they might be personally, yet in public estimation it did not affect the value of their priestly acts or their theological determinations.

Owing to the violence and injustice of kings and princes, and the insubordination of their feudal nobles, who availed themselves of the arrogant decrees and excommunications of the Popes against kings who resisted them, the Popes were enabled to prolong their struggle for universal dominion for a long time, and sometimes when the *tiara* was worn by an individual of superior intelligence, he appeared to have nearly attained to that supreme dominion so ardently desired by the holy see. Yet after all, their power was but delusive and not real. Thus, Pope Innocent III. who is by all ecclesiastical historians considered as having possessed the Papal dignity at its very greatest degree of exaltation, if measured by the arrogance of his decrees,* yet the church even in his time was entirely subordinate to the state, in all well governed kingdoms. For instance, when the French bishops remonstrated with Louis the Ninth of France, commonly known as St. Louis, concerning the disrespect on the part of the laity to their censures and excommunications, and who then requested the king to enforce them by civil penalties, he positively refused unless it could be shewn to him

* The fourth Council of Lateran, A. D. 1215, held under Pope Innocent the Third, decreed in their third canon, that all secular lords be compelled to take an oath to banish heretics and excommunicated persons out of their territories. That if they neglect to do it after admonition, that they be excommunicated by the metropolitan, and in case they persist a year without making satisfaction, the Pope shall be advertised thereof, that he may declare their vassals absolved from their oath of allegiance, and that he may bestow their lands upon such Catholics as will seize upon them, who shall be the lawful possessors of them by extirpating heretics and preserving the purity of the faith in them; but without prejudice to the right of the superior Lord, (i. e. the Emperors and Kings,) provided he offer no obstruction or hindrance to the putting of this ordinance in execution.—See *Du Pin Eccles. Hist.*

that the clergy had acted justly in their censures, and quoted to them, (*Joinville, life St. Louis, part first, prelim.*) that a certain person excommunicated by the French bishops, had been afterwards adjudged by the Pope to be innocent of the offences they had charged him with.

The French barons also, in A. D. 1225 and 1246, told the king of France, that if he did not resist the encroachments of the Popes, that they would renounce their allegiance to him.—*Michelet, Hist. France*, i. 312.

Neither were the papal assumptions at these times heartily sustained by the Catholic clergy, for they found themselves subjected through this absolute authority of the Pope to exactions of every kind. The consequence of this was, that whenever the kings became involved in a quarrel with the Popes, they found a greater or less number of bishops or abbots in their respective dominions, who zealously sustained the royal prerogatives against Papal assumptions.

As the whole theory of the Holy Catholic Church, and the authority of the Popes, was altogether the work and device of men, the anomalies and absurdities involved in its construction, continually manifested themselves under circumstances which produced every where a reaction in the minds of men favorable to the civil authority of princes. Thus among other matters connected with the dispute between Henry the Second of England, and Becket as archbishop of Canterbury, the case of a priest occurred, who after having debauched a gentleman's daughter, then murdered him to avoid exposure. In opposition to the king's judges who wanted to punish the priest for these grievous crimes, Becket contended for the privileges of the church in trying him at his tribunal. He therefore merely degraded the priest from the clerical order, as being the canonical punishment, and then contended he could not be tried again for the offence in the civil courts, as that would be punishing him twice for the same offence.

To meet such outrageous violations of justice, kings and princes were compelled to adopt high-handed measures against the church. This gave rise in England to the Constitutions of Clarendon, passed A. D. 1164, which however excellent or necessary they may have been in a political point of view, were not only contradictory of the theory of the Holy Catholic Church, but were downright violations of ecclesiastical privileges as heretofore established in the realm. Hence the Popes not only refused to confirm the Constitu-

tions of Clarendon, but threatened with excommunication all those who should presume to enforce them.

The eras at which the kings of Europe openly resisted the authority of the Popes in their several dominions, was different in different kingdoms. It began in Germany with the quarrel between the Popes and the Emperors concerning the right of investiture. In England it commenced with the controversy concerning the constitutions of Clarendon, and in France with Philip the fair, about his right to tax the French clergy.

The struggle of the Popes with emperors and kings however lasted for several centuries with various successes, though the Popes continually lost ground without perceiving it. Absorbed in the theoretic completeness of their pretensions, they seem to have been unaware how indifferently the laity had come to regard them, and how readily they now sided with kings and princes who offered far more solid rewards for their adhesion, than was afforded by the mere commendation of the Popes, who reaped all the substantial benefits either for themselves, or for their courtier bishops and clergy.

The Popes however, surrounded by their obsequious flatterers at Rome, overlooked all matters at a distance from them, and maintained their arrogant position and issued their decrees with the utmost confidence, until kings and princes having ascertained their strength, then threw off even the appearance of submission, and defied the Popes in the government of the church, in their respective territories.

The final battle between the Kings and Popes for temporal dominion, may be considered to have been fought A. D. 1300, between Philip the fair of France and Pope Boniface VIII. This quarrel commenced concerning the right of the king to bestow benefices, and for having taxed the clergy for contributions towards the common defence of the kingdom. The Pope resented the act of the king as a gross encroachment of the Papal prerogatives, and after mutual recriminations the two parties opposed each other in the bitterest manner. The Pope excommunicated Philip, and he assembled the States General of France, when the three estates of Nobles, Clergy and Commons, fully sustained the king who had written the following insulting letter to the Pope.—*Michelet, Hist. France, i. 354.*

“Philip, by the grace of God king of the French, to Boniface who gives himself out for Pope, little or no greeting. Let thy very great silliness know,” (sciat fatuitas vestra,) “that we are

subject to no one in temporal matters, that collation to vacant churches and prebends belongs to us of royal right; that the fruits are ours: that the collations made and to be made by us are valid both for past and future: that we will maintain those in possession with all our power, and that we hold all who think differently (to be) fools and madmen."

It is not necessary to follow up this quarrel with the history of the further agencies of Pierre Flotte and William de Nogaret, two crown lawyers of the king of France, the last of whom so outraged the personal dignity of Pope Boniface that he actually died from mortification and anger. The Papacy was now effectually humbled before the sovereignty of kings and princes, and in a few years after, the then reigning Pope was glad to avail himself of the protection of the French monarch by withdrawing to Avignon, where the Popes continued to reside for a period of seventy years.

The opposition of Philip the fair and of other princes to the Popes, immediately rallied round them whoever was adverse to the church, whether as impugning the high pretensions of the Papacy, or as assailing the immoralities and voluptuousness of the bishops and clergy. The ecclesiastical power that had hitherto repressed intellectual men had made them to a great degree absolute atheists, for in rejecting the corrupted Christianity of these times, intellectual men also renounced God and all religion, since they knew not whither to turn themselves, for they were as ignorant of the real doctrines of the Scriptures, as they were of the Koran of Mahommed. They were however exasperated against the tyranny of the Pope and clergy, and beginning to be enlightened by the writings of the ancient Roman philosophers and historians, recently brought to light through the revival of letters, they now came forward and attacked the church in the bitterest manner. The chancellors and crown lawyers of the time, either irreligious or atheistical in their principles, maintained the prerogatives of their royal masters against the Popes with the greatest zeal, while in the last place the really pious portion of the community, whether clergy or laymen, assailed the church in a still more important particular, by insisting upon a universal reformation.

The whole intellectual and moral portion of Christendom was thus excited against the abuses and corruptions of the church, and nothing could have sustained her, but the deep and inveterately established belief of the people at large in the theory of her origin as being that Holy Catholic Church established by Christ, which should endure to the end of the world. Under this delusive notion

devout persons every where consoled themselves, that though the Popes and clergy might be immoral and scandalous in their lives, yet they still had the power, in virtue of their ecclesiastical ordination, to communicate grace in the administration of sacraments, and to give absolution to mankind for their sins when truly penitent. However much devout persons therefore lamented the corruptions of the church, they still remained faithful in their adhesion to her, and awaited the time when God should providentially interfere to accomplish the necessary reformation.

From the time of the defeat of Boniface VIII. in his dispute with Philip the fair, and the flight of Clement V. to Avignon in France, the Popes ceased to struggle with the kings of Europe for dominion in temporalities. Their spiritual authority in all things that did not trench on royalty was conceded to them, and the Popes henceforth confined themselves to ruling over the Papal States, and in controlling the bishops and clergy of the various kingdoms of Europe. From these they exacted large sums of money either by direct taxation, or through the heavy assessments made to confirm their right to enjoy the benefices or dignities conferred on them by princes or ecclesiastical bodies.

In the great wealth and dignity thus enjoyed, either directly or indirectly, the Popes and dignified clergy generally became exceedingly worldly-minded and voluptuous. These immoralities gradually extended themselves to the inferior orders of the clergy and the monks and nuns, so that by the beginning of the fourteenth century all serious christians became exceedingly scandalized, and an indignant cry was heard from all parts of Christendom, demanding a reformation in the morals of the church, which in the language of the times, "was corrupt both in its head and members."

But how was a reformation to be effected in the church? This was supposed to be the exclusive province of the church herself; the laity had nothing to do with ecclesiastical matters, and if the church would not undertake this great work who could force a reformation on her?

This matter became still more perplexed and unmanageable after the year A. D. 1378, when there were two Popes elected by conflicting factions, one of whom remained at Avignon, while the other was installed at Rome. This condition of things, known as the Great Western Schism, lasted seventy years, during which time there were two and sometimes three Popes contending with one another as to which was the lawful successor of St. Peter. The christian world was utterly confounded respecting the claims of

these severally hostile Popes, who excommunicated each other under charges of impiety and wickedness of every kind, and at the same time sought to sustain themselves with kings and national clergy, by any concessions or relaxations that might increase their personal influence.

After Christendom had endured this scandalous state of things for forty years, and a continually increasing immorality in the clergy and monastic orders, the emperor and kings of Europe determined to put a stop to it by their own authority. They therefore compelled the three Popes who were then contending with each other, to submit their respective claims to a General Council assembled at Constance, who were to determine this matter, and adopt suitable remedies for the reformation of “the church in its head and members.”

The Council of Constance settled the question concerning the Papacy,* by inducing or forcing the several competitors to resign, and then elected a new Pope by the name of Martin V. With respect to the reformation of the church, the matter was clogged with every conceivable difficulty by the assembled prelates, so much so that the emperor and princes were at last worn out by the determination of the clergy to do nothing, and the Council finally adjourned under the delusive promise of the new Pope, that he would take every necessary step for the accomplishment of this desirable reformation. This promise we need scarcely remark he never even attempted to fulfil,—and which would not be worth mentioning but as an additional illustration of the universal fact, that privileged classes never have, nor ever will reform themselves. If the commons have learned anything from experience, they must, when they have power, reform all privileged classes by a compulsive action on the subject, according to their own views of its propriety or necessity, and with an entire disregard of any principle of compromise.

From the time of the Council of Constance, A. D. 1414, until the commencement of the Reformation under Luther, the immoral and profligate lives of Popes, bishops, and clergy, not only continued to be as notorious as ever, but increased to such a degree, that all devout persons became utterly scandalized. Hence attacks of all kind were multiplied against the church, and the minds of men became prepared for the great ecclesiastical revolution that was about to take place.

* That is to say virtually, but not absolutely, for the schism was not fully terminated until the resignation of Felix V. A. D. 1449.

Before we proceed to state the circumstances that ultimately gave rise to the outbreak of the Reformation under Luther, it will be necessary in order to comprehend the intellectual and moral phenomena that accompanied that great event, that we fully appreciate the actual condition of the people of Europe in an intellectual, religious, and political point of view, immediately preceding that great moral revolution.

A vast change had taken place by insensible degrees among the people of Europe, since the establishment of that horrible feudal despotism of which we made a brief mention at page 342, &c. This improvement it is now necessary to appreciate, for without a sufficient acquaintance with this subject, we cannot distinctly estimate the causes that undermined the Papal authority, and gradually prepared the way for the Reformation. To bring this matter fairly before the reader, it will be necessary by some brief remarks to, *first*, exhibit the intellectual and moral elevation of the people from that abject condition to which they had been reduced during the earlier period of the feudal system. *Secondly*, to notice the remarkable consequences that ensued from the revival of letters, as technically so denominated, and *thirdly*, to shew the actual condition of the Catholic Church, as regarded its religious system in a practical point of view, immediately preceding the Reformation.

Under all the degradation to which human nature can be subjected, men are born into the world with the same capacities and powers that belong to human nature in its most intellectual and morally improved condition; and therefore though the people of Europe were involved in the deepest oppression in the earlier times of feudal tyranny, and obliged to direct their whole energy to sustain their lives and those of their families by unceasing toil, yet the intelligence of human nature within this limited sphere was evermore at work, and skill and diligence were continually rewarded by increased wealth and domestic comfort. The mechanical arts and rude manufactures of these times, gave an impulse once more to trade and commerce, which gradually drew men together in towns and cities, favorably situated for commercial exchanges. Here the wealth of the community increased, and a common interest against enemies and oppressors, united them in the defence of their rights and properties. Gradually they became so powerful, as to compel the rapacious nobility in their neighborhood to forbear their exactions or robberies, and in the universal complaints that existed in every locality against the feudal nobles, the cities and towns threw their weight into the hands of the king, who equally

with the municipalities was interested in breaking down these ferocious disturbers of the common peace.

The improvements that took place through the concentration of traders and manufacturers in the towns and cities, was followed by a continually increasing intercourse with other towns and cities not only in the same nation, but with foreigners. This increase of trade was indirectly the cause of a great increase of intellectual elevation among the middle classes, for it became more necessary every day for citizens to learn to read and write, in order to keep their books of accounts, and hold the necessary correspondence with merchants in other cities on the subjects of their diversified trade and operations. This necessity gave rise to the establishment of elementary schools for the education of the children of the commons, and which so gradually prevailed over the land, that when the sacred art of printing began to furnish books in the vernacular tongues at cheap rates, there was a people ready prepared to use them, and to become through this medium instructed in the rights of human nature both civil and ecclesiastical.

At the same time, the more intellectual class of society were rapidly increasing in knowledge, through that remarkable concurrence of circumstances technically denominated the Revival of Letters; which gradually though slowly extended its precious benefits to all classes of people, but which as being involved with some peculiar considerations in its development, requires a little expository discourse to render it more intelligible than is comprehended by the more ordinary class of readers.

At the time of the downfall of the Western Roman Empire, and during the struggle that ensued between the brutality of the military conquerors of Europe, and the church as representing the intellectual principle of human nature, the Catholic clergy were connected with each other and the Papal court, not only through their ecclesiastical organization, but practically so through the medium of the Latin language. This ancient tongue was necessarily preserved by the Church from the circumstance, that the Scriptures, the mass, the canons, in short every thing pertaining to the church, were written, or rather metaphorically speaking, were stereotyped in that language. This preservation of the Latin language was of immense importance to the future civilization of Europe, for in the establishment of schools at monasteries and cathedral churches under the influence of ecclesiastics or princes, the Latin language was thus made the medium of thought and of communication between all educated men, and gradually it became as familiar to

them as the barbarous jargons spoken by the common people around them, which were slowly developing themselves into the languages of modern Europe, but which until the last three or four hundred years were unsuitable for intellectual purposes.

It was therefore a matter of the greatest importance to mankind, that the church thus necessarily preserved and communicated a knowledge of the Latin language, so that when the infant civilization that gradually arose in Europe after the German conquest had acquired a certain strength, all educated persons were enabled to avail themselves of the profound thoughts and illustrious examples of that ancient Roman civilization, which in the intellectual writings of Cicero, Livy, Tacitus and others, supplied the utter deficiencies of modern Europe in history or philosophic observation; while the works of Virgil, Horace, Ovid, &c. supplied them with exquisite models of poetry and refinement. Being thus enabled to read the Latin writers with facility, the expanding principles of European civilization made prodigious progress after the thirteenth century, through the practical application of ancient philosophy and literature to the principles of modern civil institutions, the abstract rights of human nature, and the general object of all civil governments.* The inferences deduced from the consideration of these important subjects were gradually imparted to society at large, among whom they were left to ferment, until the tyranny, whether of feudal institutions, or of the Holy Catholic Church, should be broken down by the growth of common sense, and the increasing perception of human rights.

As the knowledge of the Latin language was in the first instance confined to the clergy, and the few persons of noble birth who had the benefit of clerical instruction, so the first fruits of the revival of letters were discerned in the increasing intellectuality of the clergy themselves. The first manifestation of this matter was exhibited in the logical disputes that arose among them concerning the true meaning of words and terms employed in the theology of those times, or as implicated in the nature and relation of things comprehended within the narrow limits of the philosophical system

* Hobbes, the great advocate of arbitrary government, so perfectly appreciated the influence of the Greek and Roman writers, that in his *Leviathan, part 2d, chap. 29*, he says, "as to rebellion in particular against monarchy, one of the most frequent causes of it, is the reading of the books of policy and histories of the ancient Greeks and Romans, &c. In sum, I cannot imagine how any thing can be more prejudicial to a monarchy than the allowing of such books to be publicly read without present applying such correctives of discreet masters as are fit to take away their venom," &c.

recognized by the Catholic Church. It was thus that the important dispute began in the eleventh century between the Nominalists and Realists concerning Universals, which has been so grossly misapprehended in modern times. Logical and verbal disputes were the only modes in which the human mind could then develope itself under the infallibility of the church, which forbade any direct investigations that might interfere with her doctrines, and yet the mere logical dispute tended directly to the subversion of the system recognized by the church, which was essentially constructed on the false principles of Realism.

As learning became more diffused throughout society, there gradually arose a class of semi-ecclesiastics, or persons who never perfected themselves as clergymen further than to be qualified to hold those ecclesiastical preferments or benefices, by which princes and bishops provided in these times for the support of mere learned men. Of this class of persons were Abelard, Petrarch, Erasmus, &c. who greatly enlarged the bounds of philosophic discussions through their influence and writings; while Reuchlin and others excited inquisitive minds to the study of the Greek and Hebrew languages, and thus gradually brought on investigations concerning the true meaning of Scripture passages, which heretofore had been restricted to the Latin Vulgate under the infallible teaching of the church.

The light of learning in the next place extended itself to laymen of birth and fortune, and gradually through colleges and universities to individuals of the poorer classes, who would bear with the humiliations of poverty for the sake of acquiring knowledge. Thus through various modes of intellectual culture and discipline, the study and interpretation of the ancient civil law of the Romans, the study of philosophy, astronomy, medicine, natural history, &c. the minds of intellectual men whether nobles or commoners gradually became prepared to throw off the trammels of authority, and think for themselves according to principles of truth and reason.

There was also at this time a large body of devout men in the bosom of the Catholic Church who had become exceedingly offended with the immoral lives of many of the clergy, who whether as Popes, bishops, priests or monks, had shocked all pious minds by the gross inconsistency of the pure and holy system of Christianity being administered by worldly-minded or licentious ecclesiastics. However much such persons were entangled in the theory of a Holy Catholic Church supposed to be established by Christ, which was to endure to the literal ending of the world, they

had become staggered in their belief, whether through their own inferences or as awakened by the opposition to the doctrines of the church made by the Waldenses, Albigenses, &c. from an early period, or from the more recent attacks of the disciples of Wickliffe. This extraordinary man having commenced in England about A. D. 1376, to preach against the vices and corrupt doctrines of the church, had in the course of the ensuing hundred years filled Europe with his followers, who inveighed in the bitterest manner against the clergy and monks, and for the first time assailed a vital doctrine to the theory of the Holy Catholic Church, by contending that the sacraments were of no benefit if administered by a wicked priest.

As Protestants for the most part have very false notions concerning the actual amount of piety and sincere religion that prevailed in the Catholic Church during several centuries prior to the Reformation, it is of importance to convince them of their error in this particular. Notwithstanding the false doctrine and corruptions of Christianity established by the church, there never was a time when there was not also a considerable body of truly devout clergy of all ranks in the hierarchy, as well as of laymen, who not only earnestly sought the salvation of their souls by righteous and holy lives before their Creator, but also in exerting themselves for the conversion of their fellow-men.* That this was the actual fact is evident from the history of the Reformation. For from whence could come those multitudes of devout persons who embraced the opinions of Luther, Zwingle, and Calvin, if they had not been prepared for such doctrines under their external adherence to the old Catholic faith. How the seeds of piety and true religion had been preserved in the world, during these dark times of will-worship and superstition, is therefore a subject sufficiently interesting to require a short exposition.

As long as the Latin language was understood by the people of Europe, they were more or less familiar with the teaching of the Scriptures. The lessons prescribed to be read in their churches, to a certain degree at least, informed them what prophets and apostles had communicated for the instruction of mankind. But after

* Neander, in a little work entitled, "Light in dark places," has given us a few sketches of some twenty or more Catholic clergymen in the middle ages, who were truly devout and pious men. These are but a mere sample of the religious men in those times, but which sufficiently shews, that although entangled in the ecclesiastical perversions of the Catholic Church, there were nevertheless a considerable body of men who not only sought after personal holiness themselves, but manifested the most unbounded love for the souls of other persons.

the German conquest the Latin language gradually became unintelligible, and the modern dialects of Europe slowly began to develope themselves, full however of barbarous and unsettled modes of expression that prevailed for several centuries. During these times there was no encouragement to any pious person to undertake the translation of the Scriptures into these barbarous forms of speech. Thus from a very natural cause, and not from any crafty policy of the Church of Rome, the Scripture became a sealed book to the laity; and not only the Scriptures, but the services of the church continued to be performed in an unknown tongue to the people. Protestants have found great fault with the Catholic Church for this condition of things, but at the times of which we are speaking they could not have acted differently. It would have been next to impossible to have translated the Mass and services of the church, with their music and chanting, then deemed essential, into the barbarous unsettled jargons spoken in Europe from the fifth to the thirteenth centuries.

But while this distressing state of ignorance lasted, there were many of the clergy, who in a true spirit of christian love for the souls of men, earnestly devoted themselves to the religious instruction of the people. They taught them the nature of their moral and religious obligations before God, as set forth in the ten commandments, and as more briefly and spiritually comprehended in the rule of Christ of doing to others as they would others should do to them. Thus though the simplicity of Christianity was at the same time darkened by the inventions and devices of men, yet the Catholic clergy never intermitted to insist upon the moral obligations required of mankind in the Scriptures, and that all transgression in these particulars constituted sins before God,* from whose righteous judgments men only could be delivered through repent-

* Thus for instance in king Ethelred's reign, A. D. 994, among other canons it was enacted, "that every priest be prepared to teach the people by preaching to them the Scriptures, but let him that is ignorant of them, at least say this, *that they should abstain from that which is evil, and do that which is good.*"

Among the constitutions of Archbishop Peckham, A. D. 1281, is the following: "We decree that every priest who presides over the people shall four times a year publicly expound to the people, in the vulgar tongue, without any fantastical subtlety, *the fourteen articles of the faith*, (i. e. as contained in the three creeds.) *The ten commandments of the decalogue*, *the two precepts of the gospel*, (i. e. the love of God, and our neighbor.) *The seven works of mercy*, (i. e. food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, receiving strangers, clothing the naked, visiting the sick, comforting the prisoner, burying the dead.) *The seven mortal sins*, (i. e. pride, envy, anger, hatred, lukewarmness, avarice, and luxury.) *The seven principal virtues*, (i. e. faith, hope, charity, prudence, temperance, justice, and fortitude.) *The seven sacraments of the church*," &c.—*Hart's Eccles. Record*, 88, 103.

ance, penance, the intercession of Christ, the Virgin, saints, &c. These acts of faith and obedience however, were to be consummated by an absolution given by the priests, to whom it was asserted Christ had given this great power.

The immoralities and corruptions that prevailed in Christendom during the middle ages, therefore, did not proceed from the church as having lowered the standard of morality, but from having instituted modes of propitiation whereby men could by human inventions be absolved from the judgments which Jehovah had denounced against their sins.*

But though these causes of christian corruption prevailed extensively, there was nevertheless at all times a considerable body of pious persons, whether lay or clerical, who sought perfection before Jehovah in personal righteousness and holiness of life.—They desired to live without sin, and not merely escape the penalties denounced against it by the use of ecclesiastical institutions. Thus among the clergy and laity of the Romish Church arose a considerable body of devout persons, who were generally known in the times of which we are speaking by the appellation of *Mystics*; and who, though in certain instances guilty of much absurdity and extravagance through false notions concerning *divine grace*, yet during the middle ages they constituted an important counterpoise against the philosophy of the scholastic divines, who made Christianity a mere metaphysical scheme, or the formalism of the church in her external administrations that made Christianity a mere system of priestly rites.

I trust enough has been said in our former pages to convince the reader, that all corruptions of Christianity have been insensibly and unintentionally accomplished. The mischief was essentially effected by devout and well meaning men having introduced innovations into the religious system established by the apostles, under the delusion that they were thus promoting the importance or influence of the christian religion. Each addition they made however, affected the simplicity of the foundation by perverting its actual principles, so that after a time the true theory of Christianity

* Louis XI. of France, A. D. 1461, was once overheard to offer the following prayer to our Lady of Cleri (the Virgin Mary) "Ah my good Lady, my pretty mistress, my chosen friend, in whom I have always had consolation, I beseech thee to intreat God for me, and be my advocate with him, that he would *pardon me the murder of my brother, whom I got poisoned by this cursed Abbot of St John*; to thee I confess my sin, as to my kind patroness and mistress;—obtain my pardon therefore, my good lady, and *I know what I will give you.*"—Brantome, *Life of Charles VIII. in Bayle's Reflex. on Comet.* sec. 152.

was lost sight of in the adoption of that theology which human presumption had gradually substituted in its place. In consistency with these corrupting innovations, the ministers of the gospel became priests, the abstract church of Christ became concrete in the *Holy Catholic Church*, which embodied in her corporate existence all previous corruptions and sanctified them as the essentials of christian truth. The Papacy followed in the next place as an inevitable result, and the christian world under this organization continued in great external union down to the Reformation.

The doctrines of Christianity at this time were fundamentally the same as we have stated them, Vol. II. 316, &c. in all the corruptions of the fifth century, excepting a greater precision in their signification. There had been an increased number of rites and ceremonies added to the church since that time, and the powers of the clergy had been greatly augmented. The authority of the Popes, as heads of the Holy Catholic Church however, was the only real innovation on the corruptions of the fifth century. But as we have already said, the Popes were a mere result of the previous system of corruptions, and so far from having vitiated Christianity, they essentially but regulated previous corruptions, in some instances they even made them purer, and in all cases they had made the unharmonious perversions of christian truth previous to the fifth century, as far as possible consistent with each other, imparting thus a stability to the Holy Catholic Church which has enabled her to continue to our day in great though impaired vigor. The inherent strength of the Catholic Church few Protestants comprehend, for as it was the result of involuntary and disinterested corruption of christian truth, so it coheres together under a plausibility of Scripture foundation and authority, that even its worst abuses are so implicated in the construction of the entire scheme, that it is now impossible to reform it.

In the intellectual elevation of the people of Europe preceding the Reformation, many persons were acute enough to perceive there were various particulars in their creed or institutions, that stood upon a very insufficient basis as to their rationality or conformity with Scripture. But they were so entirely involved in the logical inferences that flowed from the delusive theory of the Holy Catholic Church, as based on the fallacious interpretation of *Math.* xvi. 18, 19; *John* xxi. 15—17, that it was impossible to break the chain as long as the apparent authority of these texts was admitted. In truth the only point through which the Catholic Church was absolutely vulnerable at the time of the Reformation, was through

the crimes and immoralities, the ambition, avarice, and sensuality of the Popes and the clergy. These matters were as notorious as they were indefensible, but as no reformation of the morals of the clergy was attempted, the outrageous inconsistency of clerical misconduct as compared with the doctrine taught in the Scripture concerning the requirements of Jehovah, gradually led men to mistrust the theory upon which the Papal fabric had been erected.

The inferences of men on this subject however differed widely, the intellectual and irreligious class of persons, including kings, courtiers, &c. laughed at all religion and virtue, and considered Christianity a mere gainful invention of the clergy. Yet as its foundations seemed to stand firm in the popular belief, this class of persons either conformed to it externally, or avoided doing or saying any thing that might bring them into collision with the church.

But with the general class of the people, and especially those in the middle walks of life, Christianity was still an actual principle that regulated their thoughts, desires, and affections; and there was always a number of virtuous and pious clergymen who gave efficiency to the system among the middle and lower classes, and taught them to aim at living without sin, and to seek perfection through holiness of life and conversation.

This class of persons, whether priests or laymen, mourned over the general profligacy of the church, whether "in its head or members," but as being wholly infatuated with the theory of the Holy Catholic Church which Christ was to uphold to the end of the world, it was impossible for them to mistrust a constitution of things that in the masses, sacraments and absolutions of the church, gave grace and salvation to every pious seeker after them, however profligate the priest or Pope might be. They admitted that corruption of the church was indeed a sad thing, but then there was Caiaphas and other wicked high priests in the Jewish church, and Judas Iscariot among the apostles;* and therefore they believed

* As we shall have occasion to revert to this assumption of the advocates of a divinely constituted church, that wicked ministers of religion are not inconsistent with their performance of divine functions, I shall on the present occasion assail such a doctrine by shewing the absurdity of the examples brought forward in its support.

With respect to the Jewish priests of whom we are informed that their immorality did not affect their religious ministrations, we contend that there is no parallelism whatever between their acts, and those assumed by a supposed christian priesthood. The Jewish priesthood, who were such in virtue of their mere birth, exercised no other function than in assisting the penitent Jew to make the mere mechanical offering of a sacrifice. They merely put the sacrifice on the altar, but they communicated no grace, nor gave any absolution. The benefits of the sacrifice depended only on the faith and sincerity of the person making the offering,

the wickedness of the clergy did not vitiate that grace bestowed upon the godly through the seven sacraments, or the priestly administrations of the Holy Catholic Church.

Such being the general state of things in Christendom, both among the irreligious laity as well as among the sincerely devout, it would have seemed to a dispassionately intellectual man, that nothing could be more firmly established than the dominion of the Popes. A single miscalculation on the subject of Papal indulgencies, by the worldly-minded, voluptuous Pope Leo X. suddenly changed the whole condition of things, and brought about that Reformation before which the Papacy has been crumbling ever since.

The custom of granting indulgencies is virtually of great antiquity, it originated from the harsh penances required in the primitive church from all persons who had been guilty of any sin or offence against the precepts of Christianity, or ecclesiastical requirements of the church. But when the penitence of the offender was evident, and he then appeared to be entitled to forgiveness, he was consequently excused from any further act of penance, and restored to his privileges of church membership; sometimes absolutely, and at other times by the substitution of some lighter penance or by some addition of religious duty. This gave rise gradually to the distinctions of *partial*, or *plenary indul-*

and therefore the actual character of the Jewish priest, was a matter of no more concern to the penitent than the character of his butcher or baker; whereas the Catholics and the Church of England place the efficiency of sacraments, &c. in the consecrated agency of the priest.

It is the same thing with the history of Caiaphas, though I fully believe that the fifty-first and fifty-second verses of chapter eleven of John's Gospel are a gloss that has been interpolated from a very early time into the text, (see note on page 26,) yet even if I am in an error on that subject, still the priesthood was recognized under the Mosaic Dispensation, whereas nothing can be more unreasonable than to adduce the example of a wicked Jewish priest, to neutralize the fact of the wickedness of christian ecclesiastics, who assume to transmit and communicate grace by their personal ministrations, when they cannot give any authority whatever to justify their assumption that they had either institution or corporate existence by the appointment of Christ.

As concerns Judas Iscariot, he never transmitted the influences of the Holy Spirit, or exercised any other office than to call men to forsake their sins and live a holy life, and consequently no one who might have been influenced by his preaching, was affected by his hypocrisy, for Judas had no divine commission whereby he was authorized to require those who heard him to submit to his teaching.

All these instances, together with that of Matthias elected into the apostolic body, or that of Nicholas the deacon, of whom we have spoken at page 165, so far from establishing the facts contended for by the Catholics or Church of England, in our view press upon our understanding a doctrine directly the reverse, as shewing us we ought not to concede any authority to men.

gencies, which in the first instances implied no more than the remission of the canonical penances annexed to particular offences or sins. The doctrine however, gradually prevailed with the people, and ultimately with the clergy, that they could thus obtain the actual remission of the sin itself. The consequence of which was that bishops and abbots obtained in this manner large sums of money, which they employed in building, repairing or ornamenting their churches and convents.

The Popes, as soon as they perceived the treasures thus acquired, saw fit to limit the powers of the bishops in bestowing indulgencies, and gradually assumed almost entirely this gainful traffic to themselves. In the more important instances the Popes offered indulgencies as inducements to men to embark in the crusades, which the holy see instigated against either infidels or heretics. But in process of time they issued them on any occasion when they required money. The readiness with which they were purchased by the people, can be easily comprehended after the reader is informed, that about the twelfth century the Popes advanced the doctrine, that the saints of the church beyond the merit necessary for their own salvation, had performed a great number of supererogatory pious acts, which constituted an immense treasure of merits which the Pope as the successor of St. Peter had the right to dispense to all those that he saw fit. Hence by the indulgencies issued by the Pope, the benefit of this spiritual treasure was made available not only to purchasers themselves, but also to their dead friends who might be in purgatory.

The consequences that flowed from the issue of these indulgencies were most injurious to public morals, as might be naturally anticipated. The Popes themselves became sensible of this and endeavoured to correct some of the abuses connected with their sale, but at the same time ascribing the ill consequences only to the cupidity of those who sold them, who as they obtained a *per centum* profit on their sales, were accustomed to exaggerate the benefit of the indulgencies in very extravagant language. It was impossible however to correct these abuses, for they arose from the very issue of the indulgencies themselves. But as the Popes continually wanted money, they as continually issued them more comprehensive in their benefits, and more effectual in their spiritual application to the sins of individuals. Hence the abuses respecting indulgencies were continually increasing to the great scandal of all devout persons in the Catholic Church.

Whether it was that the world could bear the doctrine of indulgencies no longer, or whether those issued by Leo X. were of a more sensibly immoral tendency than those of his predecessors, I am unable to state, but at any rate, it was evident to every thinking person that the foundations of Christianity were entirely subverted, when the Pope, for a stipulated sum of money, sold an absolution for every crime. No one therefore need hesitate to commit any sin whatever, who could purchase by an indulgence the remission of the punishment denounced by God against such transgression. That the reader may be able to judge of this matter I subjoin a copy of the indulgence authorized by Pope Leo X.—See *Milner, Church Hist.* ii. 210; *D'Aubigne's Hist. Ref.* 70.

“Our Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on thee,” (here the name of the individual was inserted,) “and absolve thee by the merits of his most holy sufferings. And I, in virtue of the apostolic power committed to me ABSOLVE THEE from all ecclesiastical censures, judgments and penalties, that thou mayest have merited, and further *from all excesses, sins and crimes that thou mayest have committed, however great and enormous they may be, and of whatever kind—* even though they should be reserved to our holy father the Pope and to the apostolic see. I EFFACE all the stains of weakness, and all traces of the shame that thou mayest have drawn upon thyself by such actions. I REMIT *the pains thou wouldest have had to endure in purgatory.* I receive thee again to the sacraments of the church. I HEREBY RE-INCORPORATE THEE *in the communion of saints, and restore thee to the innocence and purity of thy baptism; so that at the moment of death the gate of the place of torment shall be shut against thee, and the gate of the paradise of joy shall be opened to thee.* And if thou shouldst live long, this grace continueth unchangeable till the time of thy end.

“In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

“The brother John Tetzel, commissioner, hath signed this with his own hand.”

The common sense of all intelligent and devout persons, which had for a century or more been continually shocked by the increasing corruptions and licentiousness of the Popes and bishops, could no longer endure the doctrine thus advanced in the Papal indulgencies, and Luther and Zwingle as the representatives of the intellectually devout class of christians at these times, at once come

forward before the world and opposed the sale of these spiritual permits, which they rightly contended sapped the whole foundation of Christianity. Hitherto, said they, religion consisted in a man's exerting the whole power of his intellectual and moral nature, that he might attain to righteousness and holiness, by resisting every solicitation that might lead to sinful gratification. The principle of a holy life and conversation have been urged upon mankind through divine revelation, under the sanctions of eternal happiness in the world to come, if he lived righteously, or of an eternal condemnation to misery and torment, if he persisted in evil courses. If then notwithstanding the promised happiness on the one hand, or of future misery on the other, mankind are with the utmost difficulty induced to live righteously, and that the world already is filled with crimes and injustice, what condition of things is to be anticipated from these Papal indulgencies, that release men from all fear of punishment, and virtually authorize them however sinful they may be in their lives to anticipate the blessedness of heaven, provided they purchase for a pitiful sum of money, a Papal indulgence.

Such a conclusion as this necessarily led these first Reformers into an investigation of the essential authority of the Pope as the head of the christian church, and having then examined the Scriptures as well as the writings of the fathers of the first four or five centuries, and finding no recognition of the Popes any where among them, they gradually came to the conclusion that the Popes by various fraudulent means had usurped their authoritative position in the Holy Catholic Church, and that it was the duty of all christian men to oppose and resist them. In the next place the Reformers began to investigate some of the more prominent dogmas and institutions of the Catholic Church, such as transubstantiation, the power of the priesthood to forgive sins, the compulsory celibacy of the clergy, the institution of convents of monks and nuns, &c. and finding nothing of the kind inculcated by the New Testament writers, and only gradually taken up by the earlier fathers, they directly inferred that such things were not taught by Christ or the apostles, but had been the result of corrupt teaching in the church, for which they assumed the Popes were essentially to be condemned as being the establishers of such perversions of christian truth.

As it does not fall within the scope of our purpose to give a history of the Reformation, we shall not undertake to detail the progressive steps by which it was accomplished, further than may

be involved in the exhibitions of the ensuing investigation, concerning certain political and intellectual conditions of society at these times, which it is necessary to understand in order that the phenomena developed by the Reformation may be more distinctly appreciated.

INVESTIGATION

CONCERNING THE

DEVELOPMENTS OF CHRISTIANITY SINCE THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION.

FROM the brief outline that we have laid before our readers in the preceding investigation, concerning the developments that took place in the social history of Europe from the downfall of the Roman Empire in the West, until a few years preceding the outbreak of the Protestant Reformation, we apprehend the reader sufficiently comprehends that the times immediately preceding that great event were distinctly characterized by a great intellectual elevation of the commons or people, as compared with any previous age of modern history, and hence a decided tendency existed among them to foreclose those tyrannous establishments whether civil or ecclesiastical, that had borne so hard upon them during the preceding eight hundred years.

The first indications of the disposition of the commons to assert the rights of human nature, was exhibited in their rise against their feudal lords by local insurrections in various countries, where they attempted to sustain themselves by armed associations. The cities who possessed wealth as well as population, and which were fortified by walls, were enabled to compel the provincial nobles to come to terms with them, though they were unable to hold a similar position towards kings or emperors. These could march against them the whole military array of the kingdom under the feudal nobles, who rejoiced in a service that offered the prospect of plundering the wealthy and industrious citizens of large communities. The more populous and wealthy cities in Italy and Flanders, however, sustained themselves against their kings on so many occasions, that these last gradually became unwilling to force matters

to an extremity with them. The cities therefore, generally speaking, enjoyed a considerable exemption from the oppressions of their sovereign rulers.

It was, however, very different with the people who resided in the country towns and villages, or on the estates of the nobles. They had attempted at various times in different parts of Europe to obtain a mitigation of their almost insupportable burthens, but they had been cut down by the swords of the nobles and their retainers, and were reduced again to bondage. The peasants in France had risen against their lords A. D. 1358, under the name of the *Jaquerie*. Those of England under John Ball, a priest, Wat Tyler, and others, A. D. 1381, and the peasants in Germany rose at various times between A. D. 1491 and 1513. All these insurrections however had been suppressed, and kings and nobles, instructed by the circumstance, augmented their military forces and stood prepared with suspicious watchfulness to crush the first attempt to any similar outbreaks. The strength of the crown was still further increased in the times shortly before the Reformation by the establishment of *standing armies*, which the European monarchs had but recently organized, in order to repress their turbulent nobles or to defend their respective countries from the aggressions of neighboring princes.

However much therefore the people or commons might desire a reformation of civil abuses, they were unable previous to the Reformation to attempt any thing directly against their political oppressors: indeed, as they had no other idea of civil government for the most part but as organized under kings and nobles, whom they regarded as called to exercise such functions by God himself, so they never looked farther than to obtain some remission of their oppressive burthens.

But the controversy between the commons and the Pope as head of the Catholic Church, was a very different matter; his authority was merely sustained by opinions deduced from intellectual considerations, all of which ultimately rested upon a true interpretation of the Scriptures. If the people therefore should come to conclusions concerning the import of Scripture teaching different from those inculcated by the Catholic clergy, the whole superstructure of the church must necessarily fall, unless emperors and kings should interpose their temporal power, and enforce submission by the terror of civil punishments.

Fortunately however for mankind, during the two centuries that preceded the Reformation, the yoke of the church had become

insupportable to kings and princes, even under the reduced authority of the Popes since the time of Philip the fair. The prerogatives and arbitrary assumptions of kings and princes still clashed with those of the Popes and the Holy Catholic Church, and hence they found themselves continually resisted by the spiritual power, to which however much hated by them they were often compelled to yield; for the authority of the Popes in spiritual matters at these times was as firmly established in the popular mind as that of emperors and kings in the government of their temporal kingdoms.

It is also important to state that the archbishops, bishops, and other dignified clergy in various kingdoms of Europe, were at these times very far from being satisfied with the actual government of the church by the Popes at Rome. They were subject to the most grievous taxation. The amount paid for the *pallium*, without which an archbishop was not recognized by the Pope, was enormous. The bishops and other ecclesiastics had also to pay him as *annates* the entire first year's revenue of their sees or benefices. They were also liable to be called on for a *tenth* of their incomes whenever the Pope saw fit to require it from them, and they were continually visited by the Papal *legates*, who extorted immense sums from the clergy under various claims of Papal prerogatives, but which went merely to enrich the favorite selected by the Pope to exercise this lucrative appointment.*

The concurrence of all these sources of dissatisfaction against the Pope, whether on the part of kings and princes, or archbishops and wealthy dignitaries of the church, was highly favorable to the struggle for human liberties that was about to commence in the world. Without the connivance of kings and princes the Reformation could not have taken place so soon. It must have come sooner or later; such an event could not have been prevented, but

* Audin, the Catholic author of a life of Luther, has made the following remarks upon the ecclesiastical princes of Germany at this time. (*Life of Luther*, 344.) "The truth is, that those mitred abbots, those lay prebendaries, those secular princes who carried the crozier, had received from the Pope, palaces, estates, and rich abbeys, and they bore with impatience a foreign yoke," (i. e. of the Popes at Rome.) "They would have wished to raise taxes at their pleasure, trample arbitrarily on their subjects, and like their ancestors, live by plunder and free-bootery unawed by the terrors of Rome, &c. The Roman chancery made them pay large sums for the right of *pallium*, the *annates*, the war against the Turks, the judiciary acts of divers tribunals, the dispensation from certain ecclesiastical regulations, and threatening them with interdict or excommunication in case of refusal. Imagine then Luther convoking all these clan leaders, these highwaymen, these modern Nimrods, and saying to them," &c.

if the princes of Europe had not in the first instance countenanced the Reformation, it certainly could not have taken place with Luther and Zwingli. Nor is it any discredit to the Reformation that it was favored by the connivance or concurrence of princes, many of whom were destitute of principle or religion, and chiefly instigated to resist Papal authority from personal hatred, or from a rapacious cupidity to enrich themselves by the plunder of church property.* While the church and the kings of Europe were contending with each other for authority and wealth, the leaders of the Reformation were enabled by the juncture of events to carry on their holy work, and thus revive true piety and religion among mankind.

The reformation of the church, so long desired by all devout christians in Europe, having at last commenced under the preaching of Luther, Zwingli, and others, was soon able to sustain itself against all the force that the Pope or the Catholic Church could advance to crush it. The publication of the Scriptures in the vernacular languages of Europe, shewed to all men who would investigate the subject, what were the true principles of Christianity according to apostolic teaching, while the recent invention of printing enabled all devoutly intellectual men, whether clergy or laymen, to use their abilities towards enlightening the popular mind. The consequence of this combination of causes was, that an immense number of persons awoke as if from the stupor of narcotic influence, and threw off the allegiance they had hitherto conceded to the Pope as the Vicar of Christ and head of the Holy Catholic Church.

But though a great ecclesiastical revolution was commenced at the time of the Reformation, a vast work remained to be accomplished. Christianity was yet to be purified from the will-worship, presumptuous institutions, false doctrines, and superstitious practices, that had been introduced during the lapse of preceding ages. And as the influence of the Reformation upon these most important

* But this admission of improper motives on the part of many aiders of the Reformation, no one must consider implies the existence of any greater amount of religion or integrity on the part of the defenders of the ancient condition of things. Such an inference would be as false as that which charges the crimes, as they are called, of the French Revolution in 1789, upon the men of the Revolution. Whatever crimes they may have committed were referrible to the political and ecclesiastical institutions of the *old regime*, by which all classes of men alike, as having been trained in the practical disregard of all rightcouness, were prepared for any enormity of conduct, it mattered not who had the ascendancy, whether noble or roturier.

subjects is involved in the action of all Protestant churches since that time, the history of their intellectual and moral operations will require no small amount of serious investigation; for these subjects bear directly on our religious responsibilities at the present time, as involved in a right or wrong conception of the nature of those requirements of Jehovah under which we are to fulfil the purposes of our being.

The common belief of Protestants is, that Luther, Calvin, and other Reformers, as being raised up by the providence of God to effect the Reformation, did under the influences of his Spirit, re-publish the true and undoubted principles of christian truth, so that those who follow their doctrinal expositions in faithful sincerity shall certainly attain to the everlasting salvation offered in the gospel.

But however grateful such belief may be to the respective followers of Luther and Calvin, the fact of their having been guided by the influences of the Holy Spirit in promulgating the absolute principles of christian truth is met with the formidable objection, that these eminent Reformers did not advocate a common system of christian doctrine. Since this fact is notorious, it is impossible we can admit the Holy Spirit acted upon them to any such end, for if it had, then certainly Luther, Zwingle and Calvin would have harmonized entirely in their expositions.

But so little did Luther or Calvin comprehend the amount of corruptions existing in the church, that they never contemplated doing any thing further than purifying it from the corruptions supposed to have been introduced by Papal authority. These Reformers never doubted that a **HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH** had been instituted by Christ, which under ecclesiastical ministrations was to endure until the ending of the world. Hence as being completely bewildered with this ancient corruption of Christianity, they thought their work would be perfected if they could put the church into the condition she was before the domination of the Popes, or in other words, if they could re-establish her such as she was before the fifth or sixth centuries after Christ. They therefore adhered to all the dogmata and fundamentals of theological belief taught by the church prior to those times, with as much reverence as the Catholics, and only differed from them by having taken a stand upon the ground, that the Bishop of Rome or Pope had usurped his authority in the church after the seventh century, through which means he had introduced great abuses and corruptions, and that a reformation, *i. e.* a purification of the church was

now necessary, in order to remove all those objectionable doctrines, institutions, or practices, that had ensued through Papal usurpation. The Reformers therefore considered themselves engaged only in the laudable work of purifying the Holy Catholic Church from any blemishes that had been unjustifiably introduced into her divine organization after the lapse of five or six centuries.

To shew how truly we have estimated the position of the Reformers according to their own views, it is only necessary to shew how they undertook to carry out their principles into practical operation. All those active agents who more immediately directed the Reformation were previously *ecclesiastics of the Church of Rome*, who had as such received from her clerical ordination. When these several individual clergymen became converts to Luther's notions as to a reformation of the corruptions introduced by the Popes into the church, they as ecclesiastics preached the doctrine to their parishioners, and if sustained by them they adopted any reform of church institutions or doctrine they considered was justified by their private interpretation of Scripture. In all these innovations there was no systematic action or harmony. Any influence that Luther might exercise over them was conceded only from respectful considerations towards him personally as a learned theologian and devout christian, or as being the intellectual uncompromising leader of a reformation commenced by him at the eminent hazard of his life, and on these various considerations entitled to the utmost respect and esteem.

As the action of the various ecclesiastics who led the Reformation was thus individual and independent of each other, the necessary consequence was that some of them went much further than others in their reforms, and dissensions immediately ensued between them as to the propriety of the courses they had taken. Others again began to doubt, and then to teach some modification of those doctrines of the church which had previously been received as christian truths by the Reformers as well as the Catholics. These conflicting opinions soon gave rise to the formation of parties, characterized by certain peculiarities of opinion that in some instances were almost as odious to other portions of the Reformers, as even the ancient doctrines of the Catholic Church. Thus Luther and Carlstadt soon assumed a hostile position to each other respecting certain particulars of observance and doctrines, while Zwingle's opinion concerning the Lord's supper, so wholly alienated Luther from him and his followers, that an entire separation ultimately took place between them. Infant baptism,

which both Luther and Zwingli regarded as an institution of Christ, was utterly rejected by a large number of persons who adopted the principles of the Reformation, and who would have constituted a party among the Reformers fully as powerful as either the followers of Luther or Zwingli, had not the friends of the Reformation been frightened by the proceeding of a sect, who though without any connection between their insane conduct and the question of infant baptism, had very early filled Europe with dread and aversion to the very name of Baptists.

All these various causes of distraction arose among the first Reformers in consequence of their adhering to the doctrine of a Holy Catholic Church, which they considered had embodied in itself whatever had been taught by Christ or the apostles. They indeed also taught that the obligations of Christianity were to be ascertained only from the Scripture, and that the consciences of men owed no allegiance on religious subjects to either Popes or Councils. But then they unfortunately did not discern that they themselves had acquired all their theological notions through Popes and Councils, and that what is to be regarded as having been taught in the Scriptures, are only those particulars that have been distinctly announced to the consciences of mankind as matters of express revelation, and that inferences or deductions from incidental passages of Scripture are of no importance or obligation whatever.

Hence though the Protestant Reformers rejected whatever doctrine, institution, or practice, they supposed had been introduced into the church through Papal usurpation, yet under the delusion that the Holy Catholic Church was an institution of Christ, they gave full credence to any doctrine, institution, or practice of Christianity, that had been recognized in the church in the ages preceding the domination of the Bishops of Rome over Christendom. That they could fall into such delusion seems wonderful, since every reader of ecclesiastical history ought to have been aware, that it was only from the corruptions of Christianity in a preceding age, that the usurpation of the Bishops of Rome could have taken place at all; for the Popes only attained to their position through the power of opinion, although they might be sustained in that position by the civil arm after their spiritual authority had become recognized.

But in consequence of this gross oversight, when the Reformers first undertook, after their secession from the church of Rome, to draw up expositions of christian doctrine and institutions, as exhibiting to the world what they taught, or which were to serve as

guidance and instructions to their followers; instead of constructing these formularies upon the simplicity of the teaching set forth in the New Testament, the Reformers allowed themselves to be led astray by the authority of Athanasius, Augustine, and others, whom they regarded as the champions of Christian orthodoxy, and correct exponents of the doctrines taught by the apostles. Thus the Reformers threw Christianity into systematic forms based upon those presumptuous views of the nature, attributes or providence of Jehovah, that had been advocated by the earlier fathers in their doctrines concerning the Trinity, Original Sin, Preventing Grace, the Holy Catholic Church, the power of the sacraments in conferring grace, &c. which were wholly irreconcilable with the simplicity of things as inculcated by the apostles in the New Testament. Their conduct in this respect was still more inexcusable, since a brief examination of the earlier fathers ought to have convinced the Reformers, that it was impossible to restrict their testimony to any consistent exposition contrary to the Romish faith; for these very fathers were all of them quoted by the Catholics to prove the truth of the doctrines advocated by them. This egregious mistake concerning the value of the writings of the fathers has been very slowly perceived by Protestants, for even at this day they are absurdly quoted in partial extracts against Romish theology, whereas there are fully thrice as many other passages in their works that oppose any Protestant interpretation. The truth is, the fathers of the second, third and fourth centuries lived during the earlier periods of christian corruption, and hence, before it attained its consummation, their testimony exhibits the works of a state of transition, whose tendency to what was afterwards fully elaborated in the doctrines and institutions of the Roman Catholic Church cannot be mistaken by any candid reader of modern times.

As we have already shewn what was the doctrine of the Catholic Church concerning the fundamental truths of Christianity, the priesthood, and the sacraments, at the time of the outbreak of the Reformation; so, when the Reformers seceded from the Catholic Church, these particulars at least in theory were still impressed on their minds, however much they considered them to have been vitiated by Papal influences during their long domination over the christian world. When they therefore, undertook to perfect the Reformation by the correction of preceding abuses and corruptions, two plans of operations were suggested to them. Luther, and the large majority of his followers, were in favor of retaining every part of the old Catholic doctrine and institutions that were

not contradictory to the Scripture. Zwingle on the contrary, in the true spirit of Christianity, contended, that the Reformation should be effected *by rejecting every portion of the doctrine, institution and practice of the Catholic Church, THAT WAS NOT EXPRESSLY SUSTAINED BY SCRIPTURE AUTHORITY.*

As the operation of these two different principles has conflicted in the agencies of Protestants ever since the Reformation, I cannot too strongly commend to the consideration of the reader, the important rule of Zwingle. It is indeed nothing else than a strict conformity to what Jehovah has appointed, whereas Luther's rule introduced, and has continued to introduce a variety of observances of human inventions, which it is impossible to restrain under such a principle, since there is no limitation to the conceits and fancies of men who undertake *to improve on the appointments of God.*

As these eminent reformers could not be brought to agree upon a common plan, they separated from each other. The followers of Luther shortly after the assembly at Augsburgh, A. D. 1530, assumed the name of the Lutheran Church, published their confession of faith, and were for a long time afterwards distinguished from other Protestants by retaining the use of altars, wax candles, the figure of the cross, pictures, a modified mass or liturgy, confession to their clergy, &c. as well as the peculiar doctrine of the consubstantiation of the bread and wine of the eucharist with the body of Christ.

Zwingle, whose personal influence was far less than that of Luther, returned to Switzerland, and in the ensuing year was unhappily slain in a battle that took place between the Catholic and Protestant cantons. His peculiar views therefore were not exhibited in the formation of any sect, but the scriptural simplicity of his opinions on all subjects as compared with those of Luther, probably prepared his countrymen to receive the doctrines and institutions of the celebrated John Calvin, who after Zwingle's death settled in Switzerland, and who rallied round him a large body of Protestants, who were dissatisfied with the imperfect reforms of the Lutherans. The adherents of Calvin associated themselves together under the name of the Reformed Church, and adopted as the rule of their faith, the peculiar opinions of Calvin as set forth in his celebrated work entitled "Institutes of the Christian Religion."

It does not fall within our province to write any general history of the Protestant Churches after this time. Excluding all smaller sects on account of their numerical unimportance, the Protestants

in about forty years after the Reformation, must be essentially regarded as being divided into the two prominent sects of Lutherans and the Reformed, respectively the followers of Luther and Calvin, who very soon became involved in interminable and bitter controversies with each other. The solution of this matter is to be found in the fact, that they both as yet had very inadequate ideas of the true system taught in the New Testament, being still entangled with the notions they had brought with them out of the Catholic Church.

They had indeed got rid of a vast amount of the corruptions that belonged to the ancient faith. They had also brought forward the scriptural doctrine of justification by faith through Jesus Christ, and yet at the same time they held doctrines concerning the efficacy of the sacraments, and importance of points of orthodoxy in their metaphysical creeds, that were wholly inconsistent with justification by faith alone. They also believed in the divine commission of the clergy, and in other matters that would be altogether inexplicable, if we were not aware that they were completely infatuated with the notion, that the doctrines of the Catholic Church in the fourth and fifth centuries, *i. e.* before the rise of the Popes, were true and holy expositions of what had been taught by Christ or the apostles. Under this delusion they not only received the chief doctrines taught in the fourth and fifth centuries, but they in an especial manner took St. Augustine for their guide, and endeavored with the assistance of his theological views to compress their interpretations of Scripture into systems that advanced doctrines that St. Augustine never ventured to propose.

In the attempts made by either the Lutherans or Calvinists to reconcile the doctrines and institutions of the fourth and fifth centuries with the simple teaching of the Scripture, it is not wonderful that they soon found themselves involved in controversies with each other upon various points, whether of doctrines or of institutions, that it was impossible to compromise; and the pride or the weakness of human nature was soon exhibited to the world in the polemic disputes of Protestant theologians, who assailed each other's tenets with scarcely less bitterness than they had previously shewn towards the Catholics.

These theological disputes between the Lutherans and Calvinists were not only attended with very ill consequences to themselves, but they were extremely prejudicial to the general progress of the Reformation, for nothing seemed more unreasonable to the Catholics than attempts to convert them from the ancient faith, when these

new apostles were unable to agree among themselves as to the doctrines which were to be substituted in its place.

A very little reflection ought to have convinced the leaders of the Reformation, whether Lutheran or Calvinist, that there must be error some where or other in their modes of estimating the true principles of Christianity, from the startling fact that there was no harmony of theological sentiment among them. If they had only patiently investigated the cause of this difference, they might have gradually found it to be in the fallacy of a supposed Holy Catholic Church, in the presumptuous speculations of the fathers, or in their own unwarrantable interpretations of the letter of Scripture. But unfortunately such is the pride of human nature, that it readily satisfies itself on such occasions with a complacent assumption of the incapacity or perverseness of those who oppose our opinions, and does not allow us to see that it is just as likely that we ourselves are in the same category. Until theologians will have the modesty to believe that their opponents may be as honest and wise as themselves, they will continue to be ignorant of the important truth that theological differences of opinion, when not involved with any manifest self-interest, for the most part are referrible to the common presumption of all parties in undertaking to determine upon incomprehensible subjects, with which generally speaking they actually have no concern.

Whilst this intellectual civil war was going on among Protestants, we must not forget that the Catholics still constituted the much larger proportion of professing christians in Europe. These continued fully persuaded of the truth and divine institution of the ancient system, and adhered to it with unshaken fidelity; while their clergy, from the Pope downward, employed every mean in their power to defend their church from the terrible invasion which the Reformation every where threatened their spiritual dominion.

The first step of the Catholic Church was to reform all those more gross violations of christian discipline that were exhibited in the immoral lives and conduct of the clergy, regular or secular, and which they fully acknowledged required reformation, however pertinaciously they denied that any reform of doctrine, institution or practice could be admitted in an infallible church which Christ had promised to protect to the end of the world.

In the next place, the Catholic clergy demonstrated the undeniable republican tendencies of the Reformation, to those kings and princes of the earth who either stood firm in their belief, or who

were wavering in their spiritual allegiance to the church of Rome,* and they secured the entire strength of this political argument by agreeing henceforth to recognize the regal power as superior to themselves in all temporal matters. Having thus secured the assistance of kings and princes, they then employed the civil arm as far as available, and the inquisition in all places where they possessed absolute power; and thus rigorously crushed down until they extinguished every indication of the principles of the Reformation that had appeared among them, from the highest bishops in the church down to the meanest of the laity.

By this rigorous exertion of power the Reformation was entirely suppressed in Italy, Spain, and Portugal, where it had made at first considerable progress, and so effectually was it arrested in France and various portions of Catholic Germany and Switzerland, that the territorial position of Protestants to Catholics have not been materially changed since the middle of the sixteenth century.

Having thus secured their frontier, in military phrase, the Catholics were soon in a condition to act on the offensive, and in the general reformation of the existing orders of clergy, and in the new institution of the society of Jesuits, who were admirably organized to such an end, they soon attacked the Reformation, involved as it was in the previous corruptions of the old Catholic Church, which in many instances remained in the form of irreconcilable anomalies and paradoxes to the new doctrines of the Reformation. The palpable inability of the Protestants to reconcile such things with the fundamental principles of their creed, argued the utter confutation of their presumptuous notions, in the view of all those who adhered implicitly to the infallibility of the Roman Catholic Church.†

* Bishop Jewell, in his *Apology for the Church of England*, distinctly states this argument of the Catholics. They say, "we are turbulent men, that we wrest the sceptre from the hands of kings, that we arm the people, that we overthrow the seats of justice, that we abolish laws, that we subvert the rights of property, that we change kingdoms into democracies, &c. Oh, how often have they inflamed the minds of princes with these words," &c.

Setting aside any perverse application as to the specific facts, on the general statement the Catholics were perfectly correct in their view of the republican tendencies of the Reformation. For a brief exposition on this subject, see Milton's *Discourse on Tenure of kings and magistrates*, (*Works*, i. 393,) where he quotes the opinions on that subject of Luther, Zwingle, Calvin, Bucer, Paræus, Gilby, Goodman, &c.

That Protestantism is essentially republican has been frequently remarked; see among the more recent observations those of *Ranke, Hist. Popes*, ii. 55, 68.

† The whole argument and force of Bossuet's celebrated work on the "History of the Variations of Protestant Churches," is founded upon this condition of

But however perplexed and embarrassed the Protestants were in being thus encumbered with the unreformed corruptions and presumptuous doctrines of the old Catholic Church, which they unfortunately recognized as christian truths in their creeds and confessions of faith, they would sooner or later have appreciated their oversight and have rejected such matters had they only been left to themselves. But before sufficient time had been afforded to this end, the kings and magistrates, who had previously favored the Reformation, had become alarmed at the progress of liberal opinions among their Protestant subjects concerning the object of civil government. In order therefore to check the impulse thus given, which threatened their privileges, kings and nobles undertook to interpose the weight of their influence, and since they could not suppress altogether to bring the Reformation entirely under their own control.

To comprehend this policy of kingcraft, we need only refer the reader to the statement previously made, that the Reformation was the result of the intellectual and moral elevation of the commons above their degraded condition during the feudal and middle ages. At the time the Reformation commenced, the people had as many equitable grounds of complaint against kings and nobles as they had against the Pope. But their temporal lords were too strongly secured in their privileges, through their military power and the prejudices of the mass of the people, to hope for any political reformation of the civil government. But as kings and nobles connived at the moral insurrection of the people against the Pope, the Reformation went on until it terminated in an entire revolt against the Catholic Church, and the Protestants represented in the main by the two sects composed of the respective followers of Luther and Calvin, henceforth regulated themselves according to their peculiar views, not only without molestation on the part of kings and princes, but these last had even become in certain instances the actual champions and supporters of the new opinions.

It was not until the principles of the Reformation had become so firmly established in the minds of the commons, that they were ready even to die for their faith, that the kings of Europe became aware of the tendency of the ecclesiastical reformation towards inducing a like reformation of the civil government. However much the leaders of the Reformation disclaimed this tendency as

things, and I know of no work that an intelligent Protestant can read with more advantage towards convincing him of the amount of unreformed popery still remaining in Protestant churches.

mere ecclesiastics, yet it was impossible for the nobles or kings to shut their eyes to the fact, that the laity or commons, enlightened by the intellectual movement of the Reformation, were meditating every where similar improvements in the civil government. This is abundantly evident in the history of these times, for the republican tendencies of the Reformation became so manifest, that the Romish Church urged it as an argument to all princes who were wavering in their faith, in order to induce them to co-operate with the church, and crush the advance of the Reformation in their dominions. Of this fact and its success the reader will find several remarkable intimations given by Ranke.—*Hist. Popes, 16th cent.* i. 226, 327, 330, 333.

In those countries where Protestantism was firmly rooted, the only alternative of kings and nobles was to obtain the control of the Protestant churches, so as to prevent any further expansion of Protestant opinions. This measure was accomplished very adroitly with the concurrence of the Protestants themselves, by taking either the adherents of Luther and Calvin under royal protection, according as they were most numerous or powerful, and then most rigidly prohibiting any one from preaching any other doctrines than those expressly recognized by these celebrated Reformers. If the king was a Lutheran, he required all the ministers and people of his dominion to give a solemn adhesion to the Augsburg Confession. If he was a Calvinist, they were required to give their entire assent to the doctrines contained in Calvin's Institutes. To all such clergymen small stipends, protection, and patronage, were exclusively extended, to the great satisfaction of both ministers and people of the favored denomination, who thus saw their theological opponents either silenced or forced to leave the country. Even the pious and devout rejoiced in such a condition of things in which they thought they saw the ancient prophecy fulfilled (*Isaiah* xlix. 23) in which kings had become nursing fathers to the church.

Under these delusive influences, NATIONAL CHURCHES were established in the several Protestant governments of Europe, and the Reformation was thus arrested and stereotyped in the imperfect attempts of the earliest Reformers to purify Christianity from the corruptions that had continually accumulated on it from the very first century after Christ, and which still preserve, though with diminished importance, a large amount of some of the most presumptuous doctrines of the Romish faith.

As many persons, deluded by the mere existence of Protestantism on the continent of Europe either in the form of the Lutheran

or Reformed Churches, are not aware how its expansion there has been utterly repressed, I subjoin, as an illustration of the subject, the following view of the iron rule under which the Lutheran Church has been hitherto governed by the kings of Prussia, which is but a fair sample of the condition of Protestantism elsewhere on the continent.*

Protestantism being thus entirely repressed in its development on the continent of Europe, through the despotic influence of kings and nobles, the farther purification of Christianity from the corruptions of preceding ages would have been delayed perhaps for centuries, had not the English people, the only comparatively free government then in Europe, received the principles of the Reformation with great zeal and sincerity, and which being sustained by means of their free institutions, rooted itself with such vitality of endurance in the understanding and consciences of the people, that

* From the Travels of Mr. Dwight in Germany in the year 1826, I have derived the following condensed view of the church in Prussia:

The government of the church in Prussia is entirely under the control of Consistories, composed of from seven to nine persons *appointed by the king*, who receive a certain maintenance from him. The President is *directly appointed by the king*. Vacancies in the Consistory are filled up by themselves, but their selection *must be approved by the king*. None of the acts of the Consistory are valid *without the royal approbation*.

About one-third of the parishes are at the disposal of the king. The magistrates in the cities dispose of those in their municipalities. The nobility have the right to present to other parishes by hereditary right, and the Consistory dispose of a few parishes. A very few congregations are privileged to choose their own minister, which right they have acquired from the concession of kings or nobles who have occasionally seen fit to renounce their power in such instances.

When a clergyman has been presented to a parish, he preaches to them a few times, and the congregation are then asked if they are willing to receive him as their minister. If they object to him the matter is referred to the Consistory, who then decide between the patron and the people.

The examination of candidates for the ministry is before the Consistory, and is altogether concerning his intellectual endowments and attainments. They are sometimes required not to preach against the Augsburg Confession, but every one is left to entertain what opinion he pleases concerning the nature of the Scriptures. Mr. Dwight says, that not one in five of the members of the Consistory who thus approve of the candidates for the ministry, or who govern the church, believe in the inspiration of the Old Testament, and not a small number of them reject that of the New Testament.

There were four titular bishops appointed by the king since the year 1816 as the reward of distinguished merit. They have no power whatever.

No conventions of the clergy are allowed to assemble in any manner.

The orthodox Lutheran clergy consider any resistance to a legitimate king to be a sin in the sight of God, and consequently thoroughly maintain the doctrine of passive obedience. Dwight says he never met with or heard of one that did not believe in this doctrine. The king, who appoints all the professors in the universities, is therefore careful to select none but those who are orthodox.

no power of their royal or aristocratic rulers could altogether prevent its expansion, however earnestly they have tried the experiment.

It is not necessary to state the history of the commencement of the Reformation in England. The bulk of the people, and more or less of their gentry and nobility, already prepared by the writings of Wickliffe, became converts to the doctrines of Luther or Calvin, and the island was soon filled with persons who renounced the authority of the Pope. Henry VIII. then king of England, and his successors in the throne down to Charles I. followed the examples of the kings on the continent, and established national churches in England and Scotland according as they could control the popular mind. The Church of England was organized in its peculiar features in the Southern portion of the island, and the Church of Scotland, on a Presbyterian foundation in the Northern part. Each church received the protection and patronage of the royal government in such a manner, as enabled the monarchy to control these ecclesiastical establishments as far as the genius of the British people, enlightened by their free institutions, would bear. If Great Britain had been ruled by merely despotic princes, Protestantism would have been bound in as iron a despotism as on the continent; but fortunately for mankind, the kings of England governed through parliaments, a most essential branch of which was composed of members elected by the commons of England. Though the parliament itself was often cowed and repressed by the prerogatives of the crown during these times, the sacred spirit of liberty was alive among them and their constituents, who had become essentially Protestant in their religious belief. Thus under the combined influences of both civil and religious aspirations after liberty, they were enabled to struggle for the rights of human nature until the iron arm of despotism was broken, and the mitigated oppression of a mere numerical majority of the members of parliament was substituted in its place. The influence of kings and nobles still prevailed, but there was now a field on which humanity could contend in a legal way against oppression, and the consequences were inevitable, that under such circumstances truth, justice, reason, must ultimately prevail, whenever the commons became sufficiently enlightened to claim the right of having the government administered to the benefit of *the many*, or the people, and not for that of *the few*, or the kings and nobles.

Under these circumstances therefore, England became distinctly the head of the Protestant religion. Every where else in Europe

Protestantism was bowed down under subjection, barely living and feebly acting. In England, on the contrary, Protestantism was active and energetic, expanding in its influences on the people, and exciting them to a zealous interference and assistance of their Protestant brethren on the continent, and even forcing Catholic kings and princes to diminish the amount of oppressions heaped upon their Protestant subjects. This active philanthropic interference of English Protestantism, however, proceeded from the people; neither the inclinations nor policy of the monarchy desired any such benevolent interference. On the contrary, they did all they could to defeat the expansion of Protestantism, and in their struggle with their own people, exercised such an amount of oppression and persecution, that it produced two political revolutions, which finally terminated in the establishment of a religious toleration for Protestants of every doctrinal persuasion who would conduct themselves as peaceable citizens.

As Protestantism lay wholly oppressed on the continent of Europe, the further expansion of the principles of the Reformation are only to be found in the history of its development in Great Britain. It is this fact that makes the history of England so important a chapter in the intellectual, moral and social history of mankind. It is on this account that the local history of Protestantism in England involves the history of Christianity itself in the world, for if the torch of civil and religious liberty had been extinguished in that island, ages must have elapsed before the commons elsewhere in Europe, would have been able to break the iron bands which kings, nobles and national churches had combined together to fasten on the subject people.*

The principles of the Reformation, as we have already observed, had been established in Great Britain in the first instance through the writings of Luther, and afterwards by those of Calvin. Enlightened by these works, the British people, who had for a century preceding been preparing for this outbreak through the writings of Wickliffe, very extensively threw off their allegiance to the Pope, but as the prerogatives of the crown under Henry VIII. bordered on despotism, the Reformation could not establish itself in any

* It is in the spirit of these facts, in the reminiscences of those individuals who so nobly contended for the interests of humanity, that we can appreciate those heart-stirring lines with which Mrs. Hemans has apostrophized the British soil:

For thine the sabbath rest my land, and thine *the guarded hearth*,
And thine *that dead and sacred band* that makes thee *holy earth*.
Their voices reach me in the breeze, *their steps* are on thy plains,
Their names by old fantastic trees are whisper'd round thy fanes.

external form until the king himself, after a personal quarrel with the Pope, dissolved the bond that held England united with the Romish Church, and declared himself head of the church in his own dominions. When he had made up his mind as to the step he was to take, he availed himself of the universal opposition that his people, gentry and nobility, felt towards the Papal government and its creatures, who had appropriated to themselves an immense proportion of the land and wealth of the country. Sustained by the prevailing sentiments of his people, the king gradually suppressed the monasteries, and confiscated their property to the benefit of himself and his nobility, who eagerly enriched themselves like their brethren on the continent with the plunder of the Catholic churches. The English king however, still left the church a greater amount of wealth than she retained in any other European kingdom.*

After the church had been extensively stripped of her possessions, the king of England undertook to re-construct her as a national branch of the Universal Church, for both he and his people still continued to believe that Christ had instituted a Holy Catholic Church, whose ministry were to continue in the exercise of their divinely appointed functions to the end of the world. They were also under the firm persuasion, that the Popes of Rome from the seventh century had by an artful and flagitious policy attained their rule over the church, which they had corrupted for selfish and ambitious purposes. It was therefore only necessary in their opinion in order to re-establish the church in her apostolic purity, that they should return to the doctrines, institutions, and practices recognized in the first four or five centuries after Christ; or in other words, before the Popes had attained to their supremacy as the infallible heads of the church.

Following Luther's notion as to the mode in which a reform of the church was to be effected, (see page 384, &c.) the successive English monarchs determined to retain in the organization of the Church of England, every thing belonging to the old Catholic Church that was not expressly contrary to, or forbidden in the New Testament, and which as justified by the teaching of Athanasius, Ambrose, Augustine, and other saints before the sixth century, it was anticipated would place the Church of England on the pure and holy foundations of primitive Christianity.

* Michelet, (*Hist. France*, i. 204, note,) says the revenues of the Church of England at the present time exceed that of the christian clergy elsewhere throughout the world.

In consequence of these views, the kings of England and their subservient nobles and parliaments retained the Episcopal order in their church organization, the theory of the priestly functions of the clergy, the use of altars, the surplice, and exalted notions concerning the efficacy of the sacraments little short of being *opera operata*; a modified mass in the liturgy, and finally as much of the old Romish Church services as were not manifestly inconsistent with the principles of a reformation, which looked back for its standard of purity no further than the condition of the christian church in the third and fourth centuries.

Neither must we omit to state that the English court and parliament, in establishing the doctrines and ritual of the Church of England, also acted on the avowed principle of making things to accord as much as possible with the views of the Catholics, in order to induce them to join the church thus established by law. This was undoubtedly good policy, but it was bad Christianity, for they ought as christians to have had no other object but to conform themselves to the revelations of the Scripture. If they had done this they might have anticipated the assistance of God. But when they only made a new modification of human notions and presumptions, under the avowed expectation of political benefits from such a course, it was impossible that the Almighty should give the sanction of his spirit to such institutions. The consequence has been that the Church of England, as a corporation, has been less eminent for the fruits of pure Christianity than any other Protestant denomination of that kingdom.

Though we must make every allowance for the natural prejudices of the kings of England and their courtiers, who had been always impressed with the belief of the priestly office of the ministers of the gospel, yet in the first instance they probably felt no great personal interest in the subject, further than in sustaining the new church they had thus organized, in consistency with the character they had conferred upon her. Under this view therefore more than on any other consideration, they encouraged the bishops in their attempts to control all dissenters and recusants, by assisting them with the authority of the civil arm, and which by a necessary consequence excited the gratitude of the clergy towards the king and his government.

It was not long after the Reformation before the kings of England perceived that Lutheran institutions were much more consistent with the theory of an arbitrary government than those of Calvinism, and this perception more strongly induced them to con-

firm the privileges of the Church of England as established by law. It was impossible not to see that the Presbyterian form of church government, as advocated by the Calvinists, led the people directly towards the notion of self-government in civil as well as ecclesiastical matters. Episcopacy, on the contrary, was evidently more favorable to monarchy. An Episcopal clergy consisting of several distinct orders necessarily sustained the principle of subordination to rank, and the prince having it in his power to confer ecclesiastical dignities, wealth and power, on the members of the national church, he would be naturally sustained in all his political measures by the clergy, so long as he maintained them in their special privileges.*

The equality of all ministers of the gospel under the Presbyterian organization made it infinitely more difficult for the civil authorities to control them. They were too numerous to be bought off individually, and they had no ecclesiastical promotion to which they could look forward, and hence being more free from these corrupting influences, there were always individuals among them ready at any time to become the champions of human rights whether by their publications or sermons. This feature is so marked in the Presbyterian constitution, that even where they have been the state church and enjoyed exclusive privileges as such, they never could be altogether controlled by kings or magistrates. Nothing can exhibit this subject more distinctly than the accounts given us by Hume, and Neale, (*Hist. Puritans.*) concerning the petulant observations made by king James I. at the Hampton Court Conference respecting the character of the Scotch Presbyterians.

In a letter of king Charles I. to the Prince of Wales, 26th Aug. 1646, (*Halliwell's Letters of Kings*, &c. ii. 417,) we have the fol-

* "Let every churchman consider," says Dr. South, (*Serm. on Prov. xxii. 6.*) "that it is one of the *principal duties of the clergy* to make the king's government easy to him, and to prepare him a willing and obedient people. For which purpose the canons of our church enjoin every minister of it *to preach obedience and subjection to the government* four times a year at least, &c. Let every faithful minister therefore of the Church of England make it his business to undeceive and disabuse the people committed to his charge by giving them to understand, that most of that noise which they have so often heard ringing in their ears about grievances, and arbitrary power, popery and tyranny, persecution of tender consciences, court pensioners and the like, has been generally nothing else than mere flam and romance, and that there is no kingdom or government in Christendom less chargeable with any of these odious things and practices than the English government under his present majesty," &c. (i. e. the base infamous Charles II. who died before South could preach the above sermon.)

lowing explicit declaration: "take it as an infallible maxim from me, that as *the church can never flourish without the protection of the crown*, so the dependency of the church upon the crown *is the chiefest support of regal authority*. This is that which is so well understood by the English and Scotch rebels, that no concession will content them without the change of church government, &c. Wherefore my first direction to you is, to be constant in the maintenance of the *episcopacy*, not only for the reasons above said but likewise to hinder the growth of the Presbyterian doctrine, which cannot but bring anarchy into any (monarchical) country," &c.

But though the crown was able to control the Reformation in England so as to give the Church of England the organization they desired, yet neither the clergy nor the people were altogether passive in the matter. There was a serious division among them as to the extent to which the purification of the church ought to be carried. As on the continent so in England, persons were divided whether to take Luther's rule and retain all the institutions and practices of the old Catholic Church not expressly forbidden by the New Testament, or to adopt Zwingle's view that nothing should be retained that was not positively authorized by the New Testament.

The application of these two very different principles gave rise to a large amount of controversy on the interpretation of Scripture and practice of the primitive christians in every matter belonging to the institution, doctrine and ceremonies of the English Church, and as the subjects became more and more discussed so the views of the different parties became every day more definite, and more and more tending to a separation on principles deemed fundamental by them. The accession of Queen Mary to the throne compelled the more zealous Protestants to escape to Holland and Switzerland, where the principles of Calvin had carried the Reformation, at least in externals, to a far greater conformity with the Scripture than had been countenanced by the British monarchs.

When these Protestants returned to England under the reign of Queen Elizabeth, with greater knowledge of the subject and with greater zeal for a further purification of the church, their general action became so defined and energetic that by the crown and the courtier bishops and clergy they were contemptuously denominated PURITANS, a name henceforth to become memorable in the history of the progress of the human mind.

As the Puritans could not obtain a further reform in the Church of England, and as they had become by this time alienated from her communion, the more zealous of their divines began to hold religious meetings according to their own views of christian institutions and doctrines. This however was expressly contrary to the law of the realm, which prohibited any one to officiate as a clergyman except in the established order of the Church of England as enacted by Parliament.

In consequence of these violations of the ecclesiastical monopoly, many of the more thorough-going Puritan divines and their adherents were punished by fines and imprisonment, levied through the joint influences of the court and the bishops.

Nothing but the spirit of the free institutions of the English people at this time could have enabled the Puritans to oppose themselves against the oppressive action of the church and the crown. They however bore up with a stern enthusiasm against what they esteemed an unholy combination against christian truth, and gradually separated themselves entirely from the Church of England, and drafted an organization for themselves essentially upon the doctrinal and ecclesiastical views advocated by Calvin in his Institutes of the Christian Religion.

The institution of the first Presbyterian Church, A. D. 1572, brought matters to a complete issue with the Church of England. Hitherto the Puritans were regarded only as perverse and intractable members of that church. But when they undertook to ordain clergymen for themselves, and appoint peculiar forms for regulating their church meetings and religious services, they threw themselves into a revolutionary attitude as regarded the established church and the crown, which it became necessary on their part to crush, as none of the parties at that time dreamed of toleration.

As it constitutes no part of my undertaking to give a detailed history of the proceeding of the Church of England towards the Puritans, or of their resistance to the arbitrary measures of the court and clergy, I shall here terminate my discourse so far as regards the subject politically. Any further information the reader may require can be found in the Histories of Neale, Bogue, Bennett, &c. I must however take up for consideration the merits of the disputes between the Church of England and the Puritans respecting their different schemes of church organization, for this controversy has lasted to our own day, and is of the greatest importance in its bearing upon the further development of Protestantism. By a full investigation of the matter, I apprehend we shall be fully

enabled to shew the utterly sandy foundation upon which all of our Protestant ecclesiastical organizations rest at the present time, so that if we are to anticipate future progress it can only be accomplished by adopting a basis more conformable to the exposition of the New Testament.

To estimate the subject with all clearness, we shall first analyze the theory upon which the Church of England has been constructed.

In a political point of view, nothing can be more thoroughly Erastian* than the Church of England as established by law. Her whole existence depends upon the State. The articles of her faith, her book of common prayer, the selection of her bishops, the presentation of her church livings, and her tithes, are all regulated by acts of Parliament that do not at least formally recognize any theory of divine institution in her organization. Kings and Parliaments however for the most part have always supposed the clergy of the Church of England to be a divinely instituted order of men, through whom the gospel was to be preached and the sacraments administered to the laity. But though this abstract notion of the divine commission of the clergy may have been admitted by individual members of the English government, they have never in their political capacities concerned themselves as to what particular notions the clergy might entertain of themselves or of their functions. It was sufficient for the government that they had established a church under certain prescribed institutions, faith and ceremonies, and the clergy, provided they were submissive to the crown,† and

* Erastian, or Erastianism, so called from Erasmus, a German physician, who flourished during the middle of the sixteenth century. His true name was Thomas Lieber, which according to the custom of the times he turned into Greek. Erasmus maintained, that the form and mode of church government was a matter that ought to be determined by the magistrate, and that the ministers of the gospel as having no divine commission could only persuade their hearers, &c. The proper meaning of Erastianism however at present is, that it implies a form of church government determined by the civil authority.

† When the Bishop of Ely refused on some scruple of conscience to execute a deed conveying some of the lands of that see to Sir Christopher Hatton, Queen Elizabeth addressed him the following letter:

“*Proud Prelate*,—I understand you are backward in complying with your agreement; but I would have you to know that I, who made you what you are, can unmake you, and if you do not forthwith fulfil your engagement, by God I will unfrock you.

“Yours as you demean yourself,

ELIZABETH.”

We need scarcely add the bishop submitted to the direction of the head of the church.—*Lord Campbell's Lives, Chancellors*, ii. 153.

That the condition of the English clergy has not been altered since this time is clear from the unexceptionable testimony of the Oxford Tracts; see No. 59, which is

did not break the external order of things established by the State, were at full liberty to hold whatever theory they might see fit concerning their office or functions.

But if we regard the Church of England in an ecclesiastical point of view, the great majority of her clergy have always regarded themselves as a divinely organized corporation, whose priestly character and functions have been conferred on them by the consecrating hands of bishops, who in their preceding ordinations could be traced backwards to the apostles, who had received a direct commission from Christ. This order of things, according to the Church of England, was to be perpetuated throughout all generations of men in a similar manner, and consequently that no other persons than those episcopally ordained have any right to preach the gospel or administer the sacraments to the laity.

It was very natural that such a belief should have prevailed in England at the time of the Reformation. It had been the teaching of the Catholic Church for centuries, and no contrary doctrine had ever been mooted previously. The Church of England furthermore like all other Protestant churches, religiously believed in the doctrine of a Holy Catholic Church instituted by Christ, that was to continue to the end of the world, and they therefore considered that in their new position as induced by the Reformation, they had only thrown off their allegiance to the Pope as implicated in those abuses that had been occasioned by his usurpation of authority over the general church.

Though the office of bishop was thus retained in the construction of the Church of England, yet neither the clergy, nor the bishops themselves at first recognized it as constituting a third order of the christian ministry. This fact is undeniable, for the Catholic Church, out of which the English clergy came, had never

as follows: “The appointment of *all our bishops, and in much the greater number of instances*, of those who are to undertake the cure of souls, is vested in the hands of individuals irresponsible and unpledged to any conduct; *laymen*, good or bad as it may happen, orthodox or heretic, faithful or infidel. The bishops, every one of them, are as a matter of fact appointed by the Prime Minister for the time being, who since the repeal of the Test Act, may be an avowed Socinian, or even an atheist,” (as many of them were before the repeal.) “A very large proportion of the other church benefices carrying with them cure of souls are likewise in the hands of the Prime Minister, or of the Lord Chancellor and other lay patrons, who like him may be of any or no religion.”

If I had more space I should like to add other particulars from this tract concerning the farce of episcopal election, consecration, &c. The reader who will take the trouble to examine it will be well repaid.

sustained any such doctrine, and which was formally so determined by the Council of Trent, A. D. 1563. See Vol. II. 177.

The original argument of the English Church in advocating episcopacy was, that it had always existed in the primitive church so far back in time as in their opinion to fully justify the belief that such an institution must have been approved of by the apostles. Otherwise so considerable an innovation they thought could not have been introduced into the christian church at so early a period. As the fallacy of this reasoning has been sufficiently exposed at page 278, &c. we shall not again undertake to refute it.

But until the Puritans began to separate from the Church of England, the question concerning Episcopal authority as now contended for by that church had not been agitated, and hence clergymen of the Church of England, however much they may have regarded their ecclesiastical organization as being more conformable to the institutions of the primitive church than that of other Protestant churches on the continent, yet they did not in the first instance regard the ordination of their Protestant brethren elsewhere as being less valid than their own.* Hence they received them as true ministers of Christ, and admitted them to a participation of their ecclesiastical privileges as far as necessity or charity required of them.

This friendly and christian deportment of the Church of England to other Protestant denominations was of no long continuance, for it was soon perceived that if they recognized the Protestants on the continent as brethren, they must in consistency extend a like recognition to the Puritans. This however they found impossible to do without abandoning the foundation they had hitherto maintained, that the Church of England had been reformed and perfected on the true principles of Christianity, as illustrated in the theory and constitution of the primitive church of the third, fourth and fifth centuries. The English clergy of the establishment therefore gradually renounced all communion with the Protestants on the continent, as differing from them on the subject of Episcopal organization, and henceforth treated them and the Puritans alike as being schismatics, who had departed from the true constitution of the Church of Christ.

* The divine commission of bishops in the Church of England as a third order of the ministry, was first publicly advanced A. D. 1588, in Queen Elizabeth's reign, by Dr. Bancroft, afterwards archbishop of Canterbury.—*Neale's Hist. Puritans*, i. 262, 311, 361.

The fundamental cause of this lofty assumption of the Church of England towards Protestants of all other denominations, evidently arose from the conflicting notions with which the different parties regarded the character and functions of the ministers of the gospel. The Church of England not only adhered with all tenacity to episcopacy, but also to the old Catholic doctrine *that the clergy were priests*, and as such exercised priestly functions. The Protestants on the continent and the Puritans in England alike contended, that the ministers of the gospel were equal in point of order, and *only teachers or instructors of the people*, and though they had a divine commission as such, yet that they exercised no priestly function whatever.

Hence the opposition of the Puritans to the Church of England was not concerning any theological doctrine. In fact the church in the first instance was strictly Calvinistic in those particulars. The hostility of the Puritans was directed against episcopacy, the vestments of the clergy, the use of altars, or the term altar, the lighting of candles on the altar, receiving the eucharist kneeling, the figure of the cross in churches, the sign of the cross in baptism, or on other occasions, &c. all of which matters were consistent with the functions of a *priesthood*, and which the Church of England vindicated as having been ever recognized in the primitive church in those purer times that preceded the sixth century.

Every question of controversy between the Church of England and the Puritans I apprehend could have been compromised, had it not been for this difference between them concerning the priestly character and functions of the ministry, but as it was impossible to reconcile two such opposite theories, it only remained for the Protestant world to go into a full discussion of the subject, and investigate that early corruption of the primitive church, which had changed the simple ministers of the gospel into priests.

As we have already, in a former page, given our views as to how the christian church was organized under the preaching of the apostles, as well as shewn how it gradually was perverted and corrupted by the devices and inventions of men, we shall not on the present occasion recapitulate our views on the subject. We shall alone confine ourselves to a historical exposition of the infinite perplexities in which the Protestants of all denominations became involved, in consequence of their adhering to the notion that Christ or the apostles had instituted a divinely commissioned body of clergy, or Holy Catholic Church. To exhibit this subject more

distinctly in all its embarrassments, we must go back to the commencement of the Reformation.

Luther, Calvin, Zwingle, and other champions of the Reformation, were ecclesiastics, who had been ordained as such in the Church of Rome, and as they considered themselves in the first instance to be merely reformers of what had been corruptly introduced into the Christian Church, they were regarded both by themselves and by their followers as being clergymen who legitimately exercised all ecclesiastical functions. Why then should they not continue to preach the gospel, baptize, and administer the communion as heretofore? Neither ecclesiastics nor people appear to have considered the subject in any other light, until it became necessary for them to restrain other persons not approved of by them, from the exercise of what was considered to pertain to ecclesiastical functions. This circumstance must have brought the subject very forcibly to their minds, and if they had duly estimated its bearing, they ought to have discerned that they had not accomplished a Reformation, but a REVOLUTION, which they were now required to provide for by a legislation on principles wholly different from those that had hitherto prevailed in Christendom.

This subject of ecclesiastical ordination however involved many considerations of great perplexity to persons who were still deeply prejudiced by their previous notions concerning the ministerial office.

For as the Reformers held fast to the belief that a Holy Catholic Church had been appointed by Christ, that was to continue to the end of the world, so they as firmly believed that in all time since the promulgation of Christianity, a certain body of men had been ever consecrated under divine authority, to an exclusive performance of ministerial functions, and who under the teaching of the primitive fathers and the whole Catholic Church, had ever been regarded as essentially constituting that church with whom Christ was to manifest his presence and protection, until the consummation of all things.

But this doctrine of the perpetuity of Christ's Church in a visible corporation or community, was wholly irreconcilable with the doctrine of the Reformation; for the Papal Church through which ecclesiastical ordination could only be derived, was regarded by them as the anti-christ, or that mystical harlot who had filled the earth with her abominations. Hence it was impossible under such a belief to comprehend how Christ could have been always present in his mystical agency with a system so manifestly corrupt and

anti-christian. Yet notwithstanding this palpable inference, the first Reformers could not discern the utter fallacy of their notion concerning a Holy Catholic Church with a divine commission for its ecclesiastical ministers.

Before the first Reformers could take time to properly estimate this subject, they were hard pressed by various circumstances that required immediate action. Injudicious and heated zealots were rising up around them who advocated what the more prominent Reformers esteemed to be very pernicious doctrines. These persons they knew not how to repress unless by claiming a divine authority for their own ecclesiastical ministry. Such an assumption however was involved with insurmountable perplexities, and indeed would not have been tolerated had not the prejudices of their converts, who all believed a divine commission was essential to a minister of the gospel, enabled them to dispense with any proof so far as regarded their assumption on the subject.* Luther, Calvin, and other principal Reformers, therefore did not long delay but proceeded as being presbyters themselves to ordain other persons as presbyters and deacons, contending that they had power under the authority of the New Testament to ordain such persons, provided they had a sensible call to the ministry from God.

But though Luther, Calvin, and other Reformers thus cut the knot by their assumption, the subject remained in all its perplexity for their successors in the Reformation. The full discussion of it however was scarcely attempted by the Protestants on the continent, owing to the interference of kings and magistrates, who prevented the further development of Protestantism by the establishment of National Churches; the ministers of which were guaranteed in their ecclesiastical position, and all sectaries rigorously prohibited under severe penalties. The question therefore concerning the principle of the ordination of ministers of the gospel under Protestant Church organization, was reserved for investigation in England, where the discussion of the subject could

* The perplexity of this matter may be briefly exhibited in the circumstance, that as they could not recognize the Church of Rome as a true Church of Christ, they treated the ordinations conferred by that church with contempt, and ultimately required all Catholic clergymen becoming Protestants to be re-ordained. Again on the other hand they would not recognize the right of any Protestant to preach the gospel or administer the sacraments, unless he received a commission from them. This however they could not insist upon but as being themselves ministers of the divinely constituted Church of Christ. Hence the writings of the first Reformers on the subject of ecclesiastical ordinations are full of inconsistencies and contradictions which it is impossible to reconcile.

not be prevented however much the Government might favor the national church. As this question was deeply involved with the theory of the Roman Catholic Church which still comprehended in its bosom a large portion of the English people, the Catholic clergy came into the field of controversy against both the Church of England and the Puritans, and assailed their assumptions on the subject of ecclesiastical ordinations, with objections that are of the greatest logical importance towards estimating the true position and character of all denominations of Protestant clergymen.

In our previous observations on the history of the Reformation in England, we have hitherto only regarded the action of Protestants among themselves. The Reformation had now become firmly established, and penalties had been enacted against all who should oppose the privileges of the national church. The inefficacy however of civil enactments to regulate the consciences of mankind concerning their religious faith we have already shown in the account we have given of the Puritans. We need not wonder therefore that neither the preaching of the Protestants, nor the temporal power of the Government with all its penalties could induce a multitude of English Catholics to renounce the ancient faith.

The Catholics therefore zealously defended all the institutions and doctrines of their church, as well as assailed the innovations of the Protestants in England with such force of reasoning, that these last however earnest they were in their disputes with one another, were continually obliged to come to a truce and turn their united or divided strength against the Catholics, who zealously published books either of defence or attack against their Protestant adversaries.

Where the controversy with the Catholics involved the interpretation of the New Testament, or of the institutions of the primitive church before the fourth century, the Protestants generally speaking had the advantage, but whenever the dispute was implicated in a recognition of the Holy Catholic Church as an institution of Christ and his apostles, the Protestants then became utterly confounded and unable to maintain their ground on Protestant principles. This embarrassment still breaks them down in their disputes with the Catholics at the present day.

The cause of this insuperable embarrassment is evident; the belief entertained by Protestants whether of the Church of England, Presbyterians, &c. in a Holy Catholic Church, distinctly admits that Christ did establish a church under a divinely commissioned ministry, who were to instruct mankind with authority, administer

sacraments, and ordain other persons to succeed them in this responsible office, under the spiritual superintendence of Christ till the literal ending of the world.

Such being the universal belief of the Protestants concerning the original institution of the christian church and its divinely constituted ministers, the Catholics as holding the same theory, then consistently maintained, that according to the opinion common to all parties, the church as being under the guidance and protection of Christ from its institution until the ending of the world, must be acknowledged to have been infallible in all her past conduct and action. For, if otherwise, what was the worth of the doctrine of a Holy Catholic Church? Hence it necessarily followed that the Reformation was a most outrageous heresy, far worse than any other that had hitherto occurred in the history of the church. In the second place, they attacked the Protestants on the peculiar absurdity of their claim to be regarded as churches standing on the divine foundation established by Jesus Christ and the apostles, seeing that they had only revolted from the Catholic Church at the time of the Reformation, and had set up interpretations of Christianity unknown during the fifteen hundred years that the Catholic Church had existed. Or, if any notions analogous to those entertained by Protestants had been ever heard of in former times, they had been distinctly condemned as heresies by the holy Councils that the church had assembled to determine on such matters.

I shall not waste the reader's time in mentioning the desperate exertions of the Protestants to obviate the force of the Catholic argument on this subject. All manner of evasions and subterfuge, were made use of, but still the Catholic objection stands firm against any connection that can possibly exist between Protestantism and that holy church supposed to have been established by Christ when upon earth, unless it be also expressly admitted that the Church of Rome is a true church, with whom Christ has been ever present during all the time of the imputed Romish corruptions and idolatries.

The Church of England soon announced their solution of this objection of the Catholics, by conceding to them the point of ecclesiastical ordination. They admitted the Church of Rome to be a true church, and that as such the ecclesiastics of the Church of England derived the virtue of their ordination through the hands of the Catholic bishops, who promoted by the Church of England to be a *third order in the ministry*,* as such had conveyed the sacred influ-

* That the Church of Rome does not regard bishops, as a *third order*, see our remarks Vol. II. 177, &c.

ence from the apostles down to the time of the Reformation. But after having made this concession so essential to the support of their pretensions and privileges against the Puritans, the Church of England then superciliously turned on the Catholics, and told them that the Church of Rome had gradually become flagitiously corrupt in doctrine, institution and practice, and that God in his divine providence had overruled the kings of England to accomplish a Reformation of his church, by the establishment of the Church of England as the true spouse of Christ, a church without wrinkle or blemish, with a hierarchy of divinely commissioned ministers standing upon the foundation of prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.*

The only practical benefit of this concession of the Church of England to the Catholics respecting ecclesiastical ordination, was the privilege, if it be worth that name, that Catholic clergymen can be received into the ministry of the Church of England in virtue of their asserted episcopal ordination, while a Presbyterian or any other Protestant divine on joining the clergy of the English establishment is required to be re-ordained by an English bishop. Except in this particular, the Church of England has treated the Catholic clergy as she has those of the Protestant dissenters, *viz.* with all manner of contempt and oppression.

But though the Church of England had thus rectified her position concerning her clergymen, so as to maintain that a spiritual connection existed between them and the church established by Christ through the ministry of the apostles, their new position was

* The absurd principle upon which the Church of England assumes an apostolical foundation through the ordination of her clergy has been admirably exhibited by Macauley, (*Miscel.* iii. 393,) in his review of Mr. Gladstone's book entitled "Church and State."

"The succession of ministers in the Church of England, derived as it is from the Church of Rome, can never prove more for the Church of England than it proves for the Church of Rome. But this is not all. The *Arian Churches* which once predominated in the kingdoms of the Ostrogoths, the Visigoths, the Burgundians, the Vandals, and the Lombards, *were all Episcopal Churches*, and all had a fairer claim than that of England to the apostolical succession as being much nearer to apostolical times. In the East, the Greek Church which is at variance on points of faith with all the Western Churches, has an equal claim to this succession. The Nestorian, the Eutychian, the Jacobite Churches, *all heretical, all condemned by Councils*, of which even Protestant divines have generally spoken with respect, had an equal claim to the apostolical succession. Now if, of teachers having *apostolical orders*, a vast majority have taught *much error*,—if a large proportion have taught *deadly heresy*, &c. how can Mr. G. call upon us to submit, &c. to the authority of a church, (of England,) on the ground that she has such orders."

virtually an acknowledgment of their defeat on the whole subject of controversy; for the Catholics contended on principles of common sense, that a promise of Christ to be with his church until the end of all things, could not be restricted to the mere continuance of ecclesiastical ordinations, even if valid, which the Catholics denied to the Church of England, but that it equally implied the preservation of the church from all error in doctrine. The Church of England therefore, had entirely broken the unity of the Church of Christ, not only by ordaining clergymen through bishops unrecognized by the Catholic Church, but by having most presumptuously undertaken to assert that the Holy Catholic Church had fallen into grievous errors and corruptions. The Catholics also contended against the assumption of the Church of England, that if this last undertook to assert that corruptions had taken place in the doctrine and practice of the Catholic Church after the fifth century, any other Protestant Church might with the same propriety, if they thought proper, go further back in time and charge the first four Councils with having introduced grievous errors and corruptions, and thus upon the very precedent of the Church of England, the promise that Christ had made to be with the church to the end of the world, might be set at naught even from the very time of the apostles themselves.

To these arguments of the Catholics the Church of England has never been able to make any reply.* They have merely reiterated

* This matter is very distinctly admitted by Mr. Froude, one of the Fathers of the Oxford Tract School. (*Remains*, i. 401.) "And first, I shall attack you for the expression, 'The church teaches so and so,' which I observe is in the Tract equivalent to 'The prayer book, &c. teaches us so and so.' Now suppose a conscientious layman to enquire on what grounds the prayer book, &c. are called the teaching of the church, how shall we answer him? Shall we tell him that they are embodied in *an act of Parliament*? So is the Spoliation bill. Shall we tell him that they were formally enacted by convocation in the reign of Charles II.? But what especial claim had this convocation to monopolize the name and authority of *the church*? Shall we tell him that all the clergy assented to them ever since their enactment? But to what interpretation of them have all or even the major part of the clergy assented? For if it is the assent of the clergy that makes the prayer book, &c. *the teaching of the church*, it will be necessary to enquire, not for what may seem to the enquirer to be their real meaning, but for the meaning which the majority of the clergy have in fact attached to them. It will be necessary to poll the Hoadleians, Puritans and Laudians, and to be determined by most votes. Again, suppose him to have ascertained this, another question occurs. Why is the opinion of the English clergy since the enactment of the prayer book entitled to be called *the teaching of the church*, more than that of *the clergy of the sixteen previous centuries, &c.*? I can see no other claim which the prayer book has on a layman's deference as *the teaching of the church*, which the breviary and missal have not in a far greater degree."

the charge of corruptions having been made by the Church of Rome, which they attempted to establish by referring to Scripture texts and passages. But by such proceeding they manifestly abandon the doctrine of the perpetuity of the church established by Christ, and sustain themselves by advocating a right to interpret the Scripture for themselves, which right however they denied both to the Catholics and Presbyterians under contrary pretexts,* but which they sustained by the infliction of temporal punishments on both of their opponents.

Since the time of King James I. the Church of England has maintained an anomalous position both towards other Protestant Churches and the Church of Rome, though the sympathies of her clergy are manifestly more favorable to the last. Indeed attempts have been made by individual clergymen of the English Church † to obtain a recognition of their establishment on the part of the Church of Rome, a matter which is not impossible if the latter could be induced to modify some of her doctrines and institutions. At any rate so far as mere Protestantism is concerned, the Church of England has been for the last two centuries an actual bulwark to the Church of Rome, by expressly defending her as a true Church of Christ, although corrupted, and in maintaining the apostolic descent of her clergy, and the validity of their priestly functions in the administration of the sacraments.‡ As these particulars

* King James II. remarked that it was impossible to argue with the Church of England, for that they used the theory of the Puritans when disputing with the Catholics, and that of the Catholics when engaged in a controversy with Puritans.

† As for instance the late Mr. Froude and the Oxford Tract writers.

‡ Some persons may be at a loss to reconcile the statement of the text with the fact, that some of the best works against the Church of Rome have been written by clergymen of the Church of England. When I speak of the Church of England, it is as a corporation whose policy and conduct is to be judged of as a whole by the action of the majority, or of the dominant party in the church. Now it is well known there are two parties in the Church of England; first, the high church party whose theory is fundamentally constructed upon the assumption that the clergy are *priests and exercise priestly functions*. This party, which is the ruling power, I am not aware have ever written any thing worth reading against the Church of Rome. Secondly, the low church party, who either *reject the priestly character of the clergy*, or hold it in such a light as scarcely differs from the Presbyterians. These last have been the real opponents to the Church of Rome, and at the same time are in favor of recognizing other Protestants as being as faithful members of Christ's church as themselves. As this low church party has little influence upon the systematic operation of the Church of England, I could not speak of that church otherwise than in her corporate action. What that has been I think the reader can very directly infer from the extract from the British Critic quoted page 230, (note.)

constitute the foundation upon which the Church of England has settled down, it is easy to comprehend why her clergy from the time of Laud to the Oxford Tractarians have continually sought to make her more conformable with the institutions, rites and practices of the Church of Rome.

Having now shewn the fallacy and absurdity that attends the position of the Church of England, as regards the supposed perpetuity of a Holy Catholic Church established by Christ, let us now direct our attention to the bearing of the Catholic objection on that subject against the Presbyterians, whom we shall, for brevity sake, use as the representative of all other Protestant sects who have renounced episcopacy, and govern themselves only by elders and presbyters.

Absurd as the arguments are by which the Church of England has attempted to identify herself with that technical church supposed to have been established by Christ, which was to endure under his protection to the end of the world, her reasoning at any rate is superior to that employed by the Presbyterians; for however absurdly the English Church has limited the promise of Christ to signify nothing more than an apostolic succession in the ordination of ministers of the gospel, the Presbyterians cannot even avail themselves of the theory of the Church of England, since they reject the ordination given by the Catholic Church, and require all priests who may join their communion to be re-ordained by Protestant ministers.

The Presbyterian divines in their controversy with the Church of England, have contended that the Scriptures do not recognize the existence of bishops as a third order in the ministry, and that the first three centuries after Christ did not acknowledge them in the sense of diocesan bishops, and therefore ordination by presbyters is valid in constituting the individual a true member of the christian ministry. But this argument although sustained with great learning and ability, is a mere mystification of the subject in controversy, for the question of real importance is, how are the Presbyterian clergy to be identified with that church recognized by them as having been established by Christ, with whom he was to continue to the ending of the world? For granting that bishops were only presbyters as to their order, *how was the succession of the church established by Christ conveyed down to the Presbyterian clergy*, for it is evident that the clergy of the Church of Rome, *whether regarded as bishops or presbyters*, alone fill up the interval of the twelve or fourteen centuries that elapsed between the primitive

church, and the outbreak of the Reformation under Luther and Calvin. If then the succession of the ministry comes through the Church of Rome, it is a matter of no importance whatever whether it came through bishops or presbyters, either of them being as much defiled as the other by the false doctrines, corruptions, blasphemies and idolatries of that church. Where then was the true church of Christ as concerned the Presbyterian ministers of the gospel during these twelve hundred years.

This condition of the argument has utterly perplexed the Presbyterians from the time this question has been mooted, and they have endeavored to resolve it in a great variety of ways. Some have attempted a solution by what Robinson, (*Eccles. Research*, 476,) has called *a zigzag succession*, *i. e.* one that lays hold on every man who opposed Catholic doctrines, &c. during the domination of the Romish Church, no matter in what region he may have lived, or what his opinions might be; and then connected them together until they terminated in the individuals who introduced the Reformation, and established Protestant or Presbyterian Churches. Others again have supposed an invisible church, in which righteous clergymen of the Catholic Church and members unknown to themselves, have ever existed even in the darkest times and thus conveyed the promises of Christ down to the Reformation. This they justified on the ground, that as Christ had promised where two or three met together in his name that he was in their midst, so there had been always such persons during the continuance of the Catholic Church, and consequently that such two or three persons constituted "a church." This preposterous interpretation which we have already shewn, Vol. II. 177, (note,) to be wholly foreign to any such application, is furthermore directly subversive of the doctrine of a Holy Catholic Church established by Christ, for if two or three devout laymen meeting together constitute a church, then no one Protestant church, be their government, discipline or doctrine what it may, is more a church of Christ than any assembly of *two or three mere devout laymen* at the present time.

The Presbyterians could have easily extricated themselves from this dilemma, if their clergy had been willing to renounce an ecclesiastical superiority to the laity, for they have ever had a sufficient knowledge of the Greek language to know that Christ's promise to be with the apostles was not to the *end of the world*, but to the *end of the age*, *i. e.* of the Jewish age; but, infatuated with the notion of a Holy Catholic Church, they could not consent to be regarded

as mere laymen. They wanted to possess *a divine authority* to expound Scripture, to administer sacraments and ordain such other persons as they might approve to the gospel ministry. To admit that any other persons than themselves had a right to do such acts, would have subverted their assumed importance, and would allow others to preach doctrines that they abhorred. They therefore clung with all tenacity to the doctrine of a Holy Catholic Church, to whom Christ had promised the assistance of his presence to the end of the world, and that they as ministers of this church had a divine commission. But as they also argued it was utterly incredible that the promise of Christ had been accomplished through the agencies of the Roman Catholic Church, they cut the knot by assuming that Christ's promise had been fulfilled, they could not tell how, until it reached the Reformation, when all difficulties ceased in the true scriptural constitution of the Presbyterian Churches, who now stood forth before the world under the full authority of Christ's divine commission, as being ministers of the gospel with whom he would continue always "even to the ending of the world."*

* The following extracts from *Calvin's Institutes*, lib. iv. chaps. 1, 2, 3, &c. will sufficiently show that his notions concerning the authority of the ministers of the gospel was not less arbitrary than those of the Romanists.

"God has appointed pastors and teachers that his people might be taught by their lips, *he has invested them with authority*, in short he has omitted nothing that could contribute to a holy unity of faith, and to the establishment of good order."

"Out of the bosom of the church (what church?) there can be no hope of remission of sins, or any salvation, &c. Hence it follows that all who reject the spiritual food for their souls which is extended to them by *the hands of the church* deserve to perish with hunger and want."

"It is a good proof of our obedience when we listen to his (God's) ministers, just as if he were addressing us himself, &c. And in so much the greater detestation ought we to hold those apostates who make it their study to cause division in churches, as if they would drive away the sheep from the fold and throw them into the jaws of wolves."

"Hence the visible church rises conspicuous to our view. For wherever we find the word of God purely preached and heard, and the sacraments administered according to the institution of Christ, there, it is not to be doubted, is a church of God, for his promise can never deceive, 'where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.'"

"He" (God) "considers every one as a *traitor and apostate* from religion, who perversely withdraws himself from any christian society which *preserves the true ministry of the word and sacraments*. He" (God) "commends the authority of the church in such a manner, *as to account every violation of it an infringement of his own.*"

"When Christ conferred on the apostles the power of remitting sins, it was not his intention that they should merely absolve from their sins those who were con-

But though the Presbyterian clergy might satisfy their own flocks with this mode of reasoning, or might puzzle an antagonist who should fall into the absurdity of attempting to prove the negative to their assumption, still they did not feel satisfied themselves with their own conclusion. Hence they fortified their position by the ingenious assumption that every true christian minister has *a special call from God*, to take on him the office of a preacher of the gospel, and therefore as being moved by the Holy Spirit, they consequently have a commission directly from God himself. This doctrine, however flattering it might be to the already ordained clergy, was nevertheless liable to a very serious objection, for as the divine call was only known to the individual himself, so any one under such a doctrine might set up to be a preacher of the gospel, and exercise all the functions of a clergyman in virtue of this supposed divine call. To remedy therefore the abuses to which the theory of a divine call was liable, the Presbyterians in direct confutation of the very theory of a divine call to the ministry from God, undertook to examine the individual who claimed to be thus called, in order to ascertain whether he was "sound in the faith," *i. e.* whether he agreed with his examiners in their sectarian expositions of Christianity, and which was however attended with this additional puzzle, that what was "sound" in the one sect, was often very "unsound" in the creed of another Presbyterian sect.

Yet as the non-episcopal clergy could get no better foundation for their divine commission they carried it to its perfection, by each particular sect assuming that they were a truly divine and orthodox church, and having as such determined whether the candidate for the ministry had, or had not, a true call from God by his conformity to their peculiar religious notions, they then if they ap-

verted from impiety to the christian faith, but rather that they should continually exercise this office among the faithful," &c.

"By this method he" (God) "declares his kindness towards us, since he chooses from among men those who are to be his *ambassadors* to the world, to be the *interpreters of his secret will, and even to act as personal representatives.*"

"Therefore that restless and turbulent persons may not presumptuously intrude themselves into the office of teaching or governing, it is expressly provided," (of God,) "that no one shall assume a public office in the church without a call," (*i. e.* from God.) "This may frequently be observed in Paul, who when he wishes to prove his apostleship almost always alleges his call, together with his fidelity, &c. If so eminent a minister of Christ dare not arrogate to himself an authority to require his being heard in the church, but in consequence of his appointment to it by a divine commission, &c.—what extreme impudence must it be if any man destitute of both these characters should claim such an honor to himself."

proved of him, ordained him, *i. e.* gave him a *divine commission*, that authorized him under the limitations of a sectarian creed, to instruct the laity, administer the sacraments, and assist in the ordination of other ministers, functions which they assert no man can exercise without a divine commission.* This doctrine the unreflecting laity of each different denomination are absurd enough to receive as being the very institution of Christ, and in virtue of which they blindly concede to the clergy of their respective denominations, the power of determining all particulars, whether of doctrine or discipline. On these subjects the Protestant clergy through indirect means often assume all the infallibility of the Catholic Church, and are of as persecuting a temper as far as they have the ability to exercise power.†

While the ecclesiastical disputes between the Church of England and the Puritans were every day more and more embittering the respective parties, their quarrel became further aggravated by the political contest that arose between King Charles I. and the

* The most eminent instances of arrogance and inconsistency in the particular of a divine call to the ministry, are to be found in the society of Friends where the very basis of their association is assumed to be, that their speakers are moved to express themselves by the immediate influences of the Spirit of God. Yet when individuals sometimes urge matters among them that do not please the recognized preachers, these last do not hesitate to assume a very lofty position towards them, and indirectly at least charge them with great presumption.

In a book recently published by an English lady, entitled "Quakerism, or the Story of My Life," she relates at page 40, that on a certain occasion when an ordinary member of the meeting ventured to suggest the adoption of a mere word in a public report, as a substitute for the one recommended by a female preacher, the latter expressed herself as follows: "It is an awful thing for one, *who is not of the called*, to presume to touch the ark. For so doing Uzzah perished, and *so let all thine enemies perish, oh Lord!* These are solemn meetings, and my soul trembleth within me. Oh it is a very solemn thing to speak in meetings of discipline, to keep down the willings and the runnings," (*i. e.* the expression of sentiments contrary to those of the preachers.) "To be willing to sit still," (*i. e.* to be exclusively directed by the preacher,) "this is what the Lord requires of us," (*i. e.* you the ordinary members,) "this controversy is against the willings and the runnings," (*i. e.* the presumption of those who speak contrary to the preachers.) "We must come down—come down," (*i. e.* the ordinary members must submit to the divinely inspired preacher.) "It is very painful for me to be called on to speak in this manner, but I dare not withhold, and I feel I am made willing to submit to the requirings of the life within."

Neither is this assumption of divine authority by the preacher always confined to administering severe reproof; for the book above referred to, at page 53, relates an instance where an unrecognized speaker was forced out of the meeting.

† The arrogance of the Protestant clergy in these particulars has been most exquisitely delineated by Bishop Hoadly, in his celebrated Dedication to Pope Clement XI. The reader will find some extracts from it in our Appendix, Art. No. 10, which are well deserving a serious reflection.

English Parliament, which for the first time in the history of the world, put the question of the liberties of mankind against the prerogatives of kings in a position for final adjudication.

Though this controversy of the commons concerning the arbitrary powers of the kings of England would have been brought to an issue sooner or later, through the mere intellectual elevation of the people since the revival of letters, yet that event had been greatly hastened, in the first instance, by the outbreak of the Reformation, and still more so in the second place, by the contests between the Puritans and the Church of England, which every day implicated the question concerning the object of civil government more and more with the general subject of theological disputation. The reason of this is very evident. As the Church of England through the patronage of the royal government had been for a long time a cruel persecutor of the Puritans, it became an unavoidable question with these last to ascertain upon what right the monarch exercised such power. Though kingcraft and priestcraft had now for centuries prevailed over the understanding of mankind so far as to make loyalty to the king as eminent a virtue as faithfulness towards God, yet the deep study of the Scripture by all classes of people in England since the Reformation, had widely dispelled such a delusion in the minds of a multitude of persons, while the republican scheme of Christianity among the Puritans began to influence all classes of persons including the nobility, who for self-preservation now found it necessary to prescribe limitations to the prerogatives of the king, which as interpreted by him and his courtiers virtually constituted him an absolute despot. It is not necessary we should take up the consideration of this subject in its political features. It will be sufficient to remark, that the controversy between the king and the people of England as to the rights of human nature, commencing with Charles I. was continued with various and alternate advantages of the contending parties until the revolution of A. D. 1688, when the infatuated James II. by his absurdly arbitrary conduct forced even the Church of England, hitherto the great bulwark of the king's arbitrary government, to array herself on the popular side. The revolution that ensued under King William III. essentially recognized the true principles of human rights whether in civil or ecclesiastical matters, and which however partially executed at that time gave an impulse which must sooner or later result in the downfall of all civil authority not founded on the principle that government

is for the good of the people or commons, and not for the privileged classes of kings, nobles and priests.

The English revolution of 1688 is an event which belongs to the history of mankind. It is the first time in the modern history of the world in which a government was established on the principle of a direct compromise between the monarch and his people, in which their rights were fully recognized under laws passed by themselves. The fact itself is an eminent proof of the great intellectual and moral elevation to which the English people had risen since the commencement of their struggle with King Charles I. and which is the more remarkable in the circumstance that at this time all other nations in Europe, but the Hollanders and Swiss, had sunk under the deepest oppression of arbitrary and despotic government.

The great principles of human liberty, civil or religious, promulgated to the world through the English revolution under King William III. were results from the conflict of different principles which chiefly, though not exclusively, proceeded from christian sectaries in England. These different principles as illustrating the progressive development of the Christian Dispensation, we shall now enumerate to our readers, and shew that in their antagonistic principles they led to those compromises of interests, which ought more legitimately to have proceeded from christian charity, agreeably to the institutions of the divine founder of our religion.

During the troublous times that followed the contest between Charles I. and his parliaments, the supremacy of the Church of England was entirely suspended, and the Presbyterians temporarily obtained such a pre-eminence that they openly claimed a right *jure divino* to a national establishment, and that the government should sustain them and their discipline by repressing all sectaries. But there was a very large body of Puritans, who as Baptists, Independents, &c. could not conscientiously acquiesce in the Presbyterian creed and discipline; a struggle then ensued in which the Presbyterians were defeated, and the Independents prevailed, who advocated the principle of a general toleration to all who recognized what were called the fundamental truths of Christianity.* Under the rule of Cromwell and the Independents, however much these times have been since caricatured by preposterous exhibitions made by irreligious men and servile courtiers, there is no

* There is an excellent, though very brief, account of the principles of the Independents, given under that head in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

doubt that serious and devout men made great progress towards a more perfect appreciation of Christianity as exhibited in the New Testament writings.

Thus the Baptists came forward in great strength against the doctrine of infant baptism, and made such an impression on the public mind on that subject, that they have ever since constituted a powerful and increasing sect who bear a continual testimony against this ancient corruption of Christianity.

A further and most beneficial movement towards the purification of Christianity was set on foot at these times through George Fox, a well intended honest shoemaker, whose followers under the denomination of the Society of Friends, would have effected the greatest improvement on the Reformation, had not their founder unfortunately fallen into the delusion that he was inspired of God to proclaim his doctrines to mankind. This enthusiastic notion, adopted by his followers who also claim to be led by the immediate influences of the Holy Spirit, has given rise to much absurdity on the part of the Friends. Though they have very unjustifiably rejected the ordinances of baptism and of commemorating the Lord's death, yet they are fully sustained in their great view of the christian dispensation that it essentially consists in love to our fellow creatures. They are also fully justified in their rejection of any divinely constituted clergy, that neither Sunday, nor any other holy days are of divine appointment, that no civil or ecclesiastical body have any authority over the consciences of mankind.

The Friends have persevered in their testimony on these subjects very energetically ever since, and in their opposition to war, to domestic slavery, to intemperance, and in their advocacy of purity and simplicity of manners, they have ever been prominent among good men in carrying on that great work that tends to the ultimate purification of Christianity from all its corruptions.

At the same time that the Puritans, the Church of England and the Catholics were engaged in hot controversies with one another during the fifty years that elapsed between the time of King Charles I. and the settlement of the crown of William III. every intellectual man in Great Britain had been obliged to reflect upon the discussions that were going on around him, and even though he may not have taken any active part in them, yet he was continually obliged to either approve or condemn the principles or the conduct of the conflicting parties, who instigated by interest, zeal, or enthusiasm, were very often guilty of a great disregard of the principles of wisdom or justice. The conduct of the partizans of

the Church of England, the Puritans, and Roman Catholics, thus in an especial manner turned the attention of all intellectual men, even of little or no religion, to the subjects of controversy between them, as involved in the question, which of these contending sects was the true Church of God. Much scepticism in consequence arose among many persons as to the whole subject, and which in numerous instances terminated in downright disbelief of the divine origin of the Scriptures. Many of these infidels were merely licentious and profligate men who disregarded all principles of moral obligation. But there were also others who were not immoral men, but who perceiving the absurdity and crimes that were daily committed in the name of Christianity, through their hatred of ecclesiastical abuses, came forth before the world under the appellation of **DEISTS** and assailed the Scriptures, as not being revelations from God, while at the same time they advocated virtue, morality, benevolence, and the worship of God under the supposed theory of natural religion.

But whatever may have been the motives of these philosophical deists, their writings were of great advantage indirectly to Christianity, for they not only attacked its abuses and the inconsistent conduct of its professors, but the deists now required that christians should prove the divine origin of the Scriptures, a subject previously altogether overlooked in Christendom, for heretofore both Catholics and Protestants in their disputes with each other had alike conceded that point.* These assaults of the deists therefore now required to be answered on intellectual considerations, and gradually gave rise to those numerous treatises on the divine origin of Christianity which have been so frequently published ever since, by intellectual men, especially those of English descent. These writings have continually tended to exhibit Christianity in its purity and simplicity, not only by vindicating the truth, but also indirectly, by disclaiming some of those presumptuous doctrines and ecclesi-

* Until this time there was no book or treatise in the world that vindicated the truth of Christianity either to the ignorant or the sceptical. Previously all instruction concerning Christianity consisted in dogmatic expositions of its principles by the Church; nothing was taught concerning its credibility on intellectual considerations. It was in this circumstance that whenever men before the Reformation became disgusted with the clergy, they became atheists and renounced God and all religion. The influence of the ancient Greek and Roman philosophers, and the Reformation combined, has since that time generally caused such persons to call themselves deists.

As the origin of the deists as a sect is an interesting subject for reflection, we have thrown together some remarks on their history which the reader will find in our Appendix Art. No. 11.

astical abuses that two centuries ago were actually identified with Christianity. Much still remains to be done on this subject, but we have a good hope that the ultimate purification is not very far distant.

The civil wars in England, and the distractions whether political or ecclesiastical that ensued until the Revolution of 1688, had also opened the eyes of the more truly devout and pious persons of the contending ecclesiastical factions, as to the uncertainty of many controverted points, and made them willing to tolerate each other in holding different sentiments. In this respect a great change took place in the Church of England, and a very considerable minority of her clergy became prominent under the name of *low churchmen*. These, though advocating the constitution of the English Church, on the principle of its greater conformity to the usages of the Primitive Church than those adopted by other Protestants, yet renounced at the same time the theory of its actually divine constitution, and advocated the extension of full civil privileges to the Presbyterians and other dissenters, who did not differ fundamentally from the practical christian doctrines held by the Church of England. The rise of this low church party was of great importance, they not only embarrassed the action of their more intolerant brethren, but they have had a great influence in moderating the temper of the laity by softening down the asperities and prejudices existing between opposite parties, and late events have shewn in the repeal of the test and corporation acts, that truth and justice have so far prevailed in public estimation, as to force the high church party to submit to the humiliation that the dissenters of England shall enjoy equal civil privileges with themselves.

The prosperous times that ensued to the Revolution of A. D. 1688 fully vindicated the wisdom upon which the English Government was settled for the first time as a constitutional monarchy. The bitterness of the ecclesiastical factions greatly diminished, the dissenters relieved from the direct persecution of the Church of England rejoiced in their mere toleration, and though forbidden to participate in the honors or emoluments of servants of the crown, they gave a cheerful service to the king in every act that promoted the welfare of the kingdom. The blessings of this comparatively civil and religious freedom exalted the individual character of the English people, and in their increasing wealth and prosperity the Government was fully enabled to maintain a most distinguished position among the proudest nations of Europe.

The last great event in the history of the progress of the Reformation in England, prior to the nineteenth century, was effected by the celebrated John Wesley, in the formation of the Methodist society. This most excellent and almost apostolic man, under the warmest christian benevolence for the souls of men, commenced his career under the trammels of a belief in the divine institution of the Church of England, and from which he very slowly extricated himself. He lived however long enough to honestly acknowledge his hearty shame at having been entangled in such a notion. *Wesley's Works*, vii. 284.

It is a remarkable circumstance in the estimation of Wesley's character, that he never fell into the enthusiastic notion of considering himself to be a prophet inspired of God to proclaim his views to mankind. This is the more creditable to him as he entertained some very dangerous notions in his earlier course respecting a trial of the spirit or providence of God by biblical lots.

Whatever opinions Mr. Wesley advocated he sustained them only by a reference to the Scripture writings, and even then with a singular christian propriety, he did not make them necessary to a communion with his society. He stood on the true platform of Christianity in preaching repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; and he received into his communion all persons believинг in these doctrines who sought deliverance from the wrath to come upon all ungodly and irreligious men. He therefore allowed all persons joining his society to hold whatever opinions they saw fit, provided they did not attempt to puzzle and distract his followers with their speculations.* His great object was that men should be entirely engaged in the great personal work of living righteously before God and man, under the simple doctrinal requirements of the New Testament such as men could honestly comprehend them for themselves.

* As to this fact, see *Wesley's Journal*, May 18th, 1758. "I subjoined a short account of Methodism, particularly insisting on these circumstances. There is no other religious society under heaven which requires nothing of men in order to their admission into it, but *a desire to save their souls*. Look all around you, you cannot be admitted into the church (of England) or society of the Presbyterians, Anabaptists, Quakers, or any others, unless you hold the same opinions with them, and adhere to the same mode of worship. The Methodists alone do not insist upon your holding this or that opinion, *but they think and let think*. Neither do they impose any particular mode of worship, but you may continue to worship in your manner be it what it may. Now I do not know any other religious society either ancient or modern, wherein such liberty of conscience is now allowed, or has been allowed since the age of the apostles. Here is our glorying, and a glorying peculiar to us. What society shares it with us?"

As the great revival of Scripture holiness among the people of Great Britain and the United States of America that ensued from Mr. Wesley's exertions is universally acknowledged by all denominations of Protestants, it would be superfluous to enlarge upon it. We shall therefore terminate our commendation of him by simply adding to the above statement, that among the more important principles connected with the development of the Reformation through his agencies, none have had a more important bearing than the practice established by Mr. Wesley, of employing religious laymen, local preachers and exhorters, as they are called, in the exercises of his society. This recognition of the true scriptural theory of the gospel ministry must gradually prevail with all Protestant churches, and in the extension of this practice among them we trust we see the ultimate extinction of that Holy Catholic Church, set up in the earlier age of christian corruptions, which has ever since exerted a most pernicious influence upon that economy which the condescension and love of God made known to mankind through the mission of Jesus Christ.

Exalted as the condition of Great Britain was through her comparatively free institutions, as accomplished in the revolution of A. D. 1688, yet the question of human rights was not yet properly adjusted. The king, the nobility, and the Church of England were still privileged bodies, who exerted an injurious influence which it was difficult to remedy, since there was no other government in the world that was comparable to it as measured by the happiness and prosperity of the people. The revolt of the English colonies in America in the year 1776, however shewed that there was room for still further progress, whether upon the civil or ecclesiastical institutions of the mother country; and which, in an especial manner, for the first time afforded the Reformation a fair opportunity to bring forth its legitimate fruits.

Our Puritan forefathers after having endured a long unchristian treatment from the Church of England,* at last sought a refuge in

* Though the Church of England has shewn herself to be a great persecutor in every age of her history, yet this reproach pertains only to her position as a church established by the Government, and sustained as such by the civil authority. Her bishops and ministers who held themselves to be a divinely constituted church therefore made use of the civil arm to repress schism, and force obedience to her requirements. The Presbyterians advocated similar measures when they had the power. They also believed they were the truly divinely constituted church of Christ, and detested the idea of tolerating persons of different sentiments from themselves as much as the Church of England had done. Thus the Presbyterian ministers though they had suffered so much in former times from the oppressive rule of the Catholics or of the Church of England, yet after they obtained a partial

America where they made settlements that have ultimately spread nearly over the northern portion of the continent. Though they brought with them much of that uncharitable temper that characterized the English Protestants at the time their emigration was made, yet it gradually softened down until the outbreak of the war of Independence, when all sects, unless those of the Church of England be partially excepted, heartily united together in the revolt from the mother country.

In the establishment of a republican government and the renunciation of all aristocratic distinctions, the people of the United States at the same time universally concurred in rejecting the union of any established church with the government; wisely resolving that religion was a matter between the consciences of individuals and their Maker, with which civil government had no concern further than to prevent any sect from disturbing the common peace by their outward acts.

The consequence of this wise regulation has been that every sect of christians in the United States has enjoyed the protection of the civil arm, and live in harmony and peace with each other. Their religious asperities have consequently softened down to a kind and tolerant forbearance towards each other, as far as is consistent with a conscientious regard to the integrity of their own opinions, and yet each feeling the utmost attachment to the commonwealth under which they enjoy such privileges.

The exhibition of these genuine fruits of the Reformation, however little it may be appreciated among the mass of our own peo-

settlement during the decline of the authority of Charles I. in one of their public declarations, (*Neale, Hist. Puritans*, ii. 224, abridgt.) after stating their detestation and abhorrence of various heresies and errors, they then especially enumerate “*the error of toleration*, as patronizing and promoting all other errors, heresies, and blasphemies whatsoever, under the grossly abused notion of *liberty of conscience*. They then bear their testimony to the covenant, and the divine right of presbytery. They lament the imperfect settlement of their discipline by the parliament, and lay the foundation of all their calamities in the countenancing of a public and general toleration.”

While I am on this subject of ecclesiastical intolerance, I may as well mention that it belongs to human nature, and that no suffering or persecution appears to have given mankind a proper view of the subject. One might suppose that the Jews who had endured such grievous oppression from christians would have learned to tolerate one another. Yet the rabbis in France during the twelfth century were so much inflamed against the celebrated Maimonides, that they appealed to the French clergy, “assuring them that certain heretics had sprung up among the Jews, who entertained dangerous opinions, and expressed an earnest wish that they might be treated as the christians treated such characters among themselves, by *burning them, and their works.*”—*Moreh Nevochim, transl. by Townley*, 19.

ple, in consequence of its being as familiar to them as the air they breathe, has had a prodigious influence on the middle and lower classes of people in Europe, although it has inflamed the malignant selfishness of kings, nobles, and established churches against our free institutions. The middle classes of Europeans however have deeply estimated the subject, they have seen not only the great strength and happiness that accompany republican institutions, but they have moreover a conclusive demonstration of the falsity of the notion that has so long abused mankind, that Christianity requires the protection of the civil authority in some form or other of national church.

The most important matter that yet presses injuriously on North American Christianity, is the unreasonable adherence to the metaphysical creeds and articles of our different sectarian associations, whose presumptuous character ought long since to have induced either their modification or rejection. It is however but justice to them to state some palliating circumstances on this subject. It was very natural that our forefathers who had been persecuted in Europe for their religious opinions, should after their settlement in America regard their peculiar views on such subjects with reverence and attachment. These were matters for which they had suffered persecution, and to enjoy them in the approbation of their consciences, they had emigrated to an uncivilized country in which they endured every privation belonging to such a condition. Under these circumstances they regarded their sectarian views not only as being absolutely true, but also as the bond of their social union. By their creeds and confessions they recognized each other as brethren, and as such naturally anticipated peace and brotherly action for the future.

It is not wonderful therefore that our fathers adhered to their creeds with a sincere attachment, and that they did all in their power to enforce them on their children as undoubted expositions of christian truth. These sentiments have been insensibly conveyed down to us of the present time, and the reverential feelings of our ancestors as connected with their creeds and confessions of faith still operate upon us, though we do not now commonly understand from whence our reverence for them has proceeded. The time however has arrived when we ought to reject these artificial formalities, and return to the simplicity of the gospel teaching.

The continuance of these metaphysical creeds and confessions of faith have this further injurious effect upon Protestantism, that they require a body of clergy to vindicate the abstract and subtle

distinctions upon which they were originally founded, and which the great mass of christians cannot investigate for themselves. Unable to do this, the Protestant laity for the most part have blindly given themselves up to the direction of those who they suppose fully comprehended such subjects, and thus they have invested the opinions of the ministers of the gospel with an authority which is altogether withheld from other persons who are not of that class. This would not have been unreasonable, if it had been conceded only on the principle that the clergy as being professed students of such matters, might naturally be supposed to understand them better than those who had not devoted themselves to such investigations. But not satisfied with the simplicity of such a position, the Protestant clergy and their strict adherents have contended for the authority of the clergy, on the principle that they have actually a divine commission for expounding christian truth.* I need not recapitulate the arguments brought forward in a former page to shew that Christ neither established a Holy Catholic Church, nor gave any divine commission to the ministers of the gospel. If christians will but recognize this fact, every abuse and corruption of Scripture truth will fall of themselves, and the simplicity of Jehovah's dispensations to mankind will appear in all that force and power with which they were originally promulgated to human understanding and conscience.

I shall here terminate the exposition of my views concerning the moral and intellectual phenomena that have hitherto accompanied the gradual development of the Christian Dispensation, and I hope that the sad display I have made of human misjudgment, corruption, and will-worship, has made a serious impression upon the minds of my christian readers as to the extreme folly of departing from an

* The absurd arrogance under which submission to clerical teaching is often insisted upon by Protestant divines is sometimes astounding. I have heard the ministers of a dozen different conflicting denominations unhesitatingly assume the commission of the apostles as being "*ambassadors for Christ;*" (2 Cor. v. 20,) which they interpreted in the sense of implying the power of ministers plenipotentiary of a modern government. To this was added sometimes the commission of the prophet Ezekiel, (chap. xxxiii. 7,) "Son of man, *I have set thee a watchman* unto the house of Israel: therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and *warn them from me.*" But as if neither the commissions of prophets and apostles sufficiently exalted the authority of our Protestant clergy, they sometimes also applied to themselves Christ's words to the seventy disciples, (Luke x. 16,) "he that *heareth you, heareth me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth me and him that sent me.*"

Whatever influence clergymen may imagine they exercise by these arrogant assumptions I beg leave to tell them that with all their intelligent auditors they excite nothing but disgust, and a silent reference to Luther's observation that they have "*a pope in their belly.*"

implicit obedience to the expressed requirements of our Creator, whether as concerns human obligations, or the modes through which he has offered pardon, grace and ultimate salvation to mankind. If I have not convinced them of the scriptural correctness of all the views I have taken on this subject, yet I cannot doubt but that I have clearly shewn, that there is much to be corrected whether in the doctrines, institutions, and practices, of our several Protestant denominations. This therefore ought to interest them most deeply, and induce the most serious consideration as to the steps that should be taken in order to re-establish Christianity in its original purity and simplicity.

Under this view I shall now state my opinion on the subject, for whatever difficulties may exist as to the modes by which the further purification of Christianity may be accomplished, yet I apprehend nothing can be plainer than the theory upon which it ought to be undertaken.

I have already shewn (page 85, &c.) that the actual platform upon which the true followers of Jesus Christ stand, whether as concerns the theoretic or the practical operation of the Christian Dispensation, is their adoption as children into the family household or kingdom of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, whereby they are in virtue of this relation privileged to call upon God as their Father, under every circumstance involved in the phenomena of their condition during the present life.

If this spiritual adoption as children into the household of God be our true position, as well as our privilege before him, it must be clear that every doctrine and institution of Christianity should conform strictly with the privilege thus graciously extended by God to all those who desire salvation from him. We must therefore implicitly conform to his requirements, and take salvation from him on his own terms, and not by substituting inventions of our own. If Jehovah has condescended to stand in the position of a Father to all his faithful children, what more can man ask? What greater privilege can he possess than to hold direct communion with the Creator of all things, under every circumstance of time, place, and condition of being, with the full assurance that his prayers will be heard for Jesus Christ's sake.

As it is utterly absurd to expect the blessings of Almighty God upon our exertions unless we conform to his appointments, let us now see what steps ought to be taken by the christian world in order to place ourselves in the most acceptable position before our Creator. This undoubtedly will be at the same the most advanta-

geous to ourselves as free agents in accomplishing the true purposes of our being, whether as individuals, or in our social capacities.

It will not be necessary here to re-state the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, nor the matters required from our faith or obedience, as these subjects have been fully treated of in the former pages of our work. On these particulars every one must judge for himself in all tenderness of conscience. No men or set of men have any right to say with authority, what other men must believe or do. A true christian is one who endeavors with all his heart and strength to know and do what Christ has required from him. As such he is the servant of Christ, and "to his own master he standeth or falleth," for no one has any right to judge another man's servant.—*Rom. xiv. 4—12.*

Thus far for the christian in his individual capacity. Let us now consider a number of christians associated together as a religious society, and endeavor to ascertain how such a community ought to regulate their action whether towards themselves or their Creator.

If we have satisfactorily shewn in a preceding investigation, that neither Christ nor the apostles ever appointed any formal ecclesiastical institutions for the christian world, it is then conclusive that our ordinary church arrangements are not divine constitutions, but mere matters of expediency for the accomplishment of certain proposed benefits. The next question is whether they are the best modes of a mere expedient organization, for if they are not the best, it would be absurd not to adopt a more beneficial form.

As respects the mere organization of a christian society it is not worth our time to enlarge upon that subject, we shall confine our remarks upon the object which christians propose to themselves in their religious assemblies on Sundays, or on any other occasion. The ordinary view is that christians thus assemble for the purpose of worshipping Jehovah, as a matter of duty required of them by him, and hence the institution of a divinely appointed ministry is so much insisted upon. The sermon, exposition of Scripture, or exhortation connected with this public worship is deemed only contingent or incidental to it, for though regarded as being highly proper and useful in themselves yet they are by many persons considered not to be the essential object of the assemblage.

Now this notion is wholly erroneous; Jehovah has no where either in the Old or New Testament ever required any worship or formal service from mankind as a matter of obligation or duty. On the contrary, it is clearly the doctrine of the Scriptures that

Jehovah the great God of heaven and earth, who created all things by his mere word, has condescended in his infinite goodness to offer spiritual favor, temporal blessings, and life everlasting to all those who will seek after them. But Jehovah has never required worship, praise, or homage from mankind to himself as a matter of obligation. Communion with him he has offered to them as a boon or privilege, and nothing but ignorance or folly can regard it in any other point of view. Worship or praise undoubtedly are natural expressions of a devout heart towards God, and as such we may say they are acceptable to him; but though they may have value on this principle, they cannot have any as being matters of prescribed obligation.

As I have found the greatest difficulty in convincing some of my christian friends that prayer and worship to God are not matters of obligation or duty, but mere privileges, I can but apprehend that more or less of my readers, who have not reflected on the subject, will feel a similar repugnance with that of my friends to the views given above. I therefore think it of importance to vindicate my exposition by some brief argument and illustration.

It will be at once objected to me, that prayer to God is every where inculcated and required from mankind throughout both the Old and New Testaments, to sustain which view of the subject a multitude of texts may be quoted. I assert however, that these texts are not commands, or requirements upon human obedience, but are *exhortations* on the part of prophets or apostles to induce men to make use of their privilege in that respect, as founded on the great advantages accruing to them in that particular.

The entire difference between duty and privilege is very clear, and the necessity of understanding the subject is of the utmost importance to the theory of Christianity, as enabling us to expose certain gross errors which have arisen among men from not keeping the two principles separate.

Duty or obligation, implies the doing or not doing certain things, on the ground that obedience or disobedience in those particulars shall be either rewarded or punished.

Privilege, on the contrary, only implies a right to some grace or exemption which an individual may claim if he chooses to do so. He may be a fool not to make use of his privilege, but certainly he violates no obligation or duty by not using it. Thus, for instance, every citizen is under an obligation to obey the laws of his country, and if he disregards them he is liable to be punished for such infraction. But though every citizen has the privilege of

soliciting the government for an office, he is not guilty of any breach of duty or obligation by not availing himself of his privilege.

In like manner as being under the moral government of Jehovah, we are required by his positive law to do certain things, and to avoid doing certain other things. These requirements are matters of obligation or duty that we cannot disregard without incurring the certain punishments of our disobedient conduct.

But as Jehovah has no where required men to pray to him, it therefore is not a matter of duty on our part to do so. But Jehovah the omnipotent Creator of all things has promised, that if men will sincerely and uprightly pray to him, *i. e.* ask of him favors, mercies, pardons, &c. *for themselves*, that he will grant their prayer. This promise therefore, is the greatest privilege that could be offered to mankind in their capacity of free agents in a probationary condition. If they will not avail themselves of the proffered grace, they disregard their privilege, and they perish in their sin as an inevitable consequence. It is perfectly clear however, that such persons were not guilty of any violation of duty or obligation in not praying, they simply would not avail themselves of the great privilege they possessed in the condescension of their Creator, by which they might have avoided condemnation for their sins.

Some persons in their discussions with me on this subject have sometimes advanced the inconsistent notion, that prayer and worship towards God is both "*a duty and a privilege*." This conceit however, is a mere verbal fallacy in the combination of two incompatible words. If any thing is duty it never can be privilege, unless by subverting the different senses of words and making them synonymous though they express opposite conditions of things.

However plain the difference is between christian duty and privilege, I do not remember to have seen it specified by any writer but Hobbes, who in his *Leviathan, part 2d, chap. 42*, makes the following pertinent observations.

"We read no where," (*i. e.* in the Scripture,) "that they who received not the doctrine of Christ did therein sin; but that they died in their sins, *i. e.* that their sins against the laws to which they owed obedience, were not pardoned. And therefore by the burthen which the apostles might lay on such as they had converted, are not to be understood laws, but conditions proposed to those that sought salvation, which they might accept or refuse at their own peril without a new sin, though not without the hazard of

being condemned and excluded out of the kingdom of God for their sins past. And therefore of infidels (unbelievers) St. John saith not the wrath of God shall *come* upon them, but *the wrath of God remaineth upon them*, (John iii. 36,) and not that they shall be condemned, but that *they are condemned already*. (John iii. 18.) Nor can it be conceived that the benefit of faith *is remission of sins*, unless we conceive withal that the damage of infidelity, (*i. e.* unbelief,) is *the retention of the same sins*."

The ill consequences resulting from not discriminating between *christian obligations* and *christian privileges* has been enormous. Mankind have actually to a great extent not only omitted to discharge their obligations or duties before Jehovah, but they have absurdly substituted in their stead a perverse exercise of their privilege, and then counted it to be an acceptable service or homage to the Almighty Creator of all things.*

As Jehovah therefore has not required men to assemble themselves in order to worship him, it is a downright act of will-worship to undertake to render him a service he has not required, and consequently our church assemblies ought to recognize a very different object as the motive for their meeting. The only consistent ground upon which christians ought to assemble is for the purpose of being instructed and encouraged to continue in the principles of

* How little men comprehend the privilege of prayer, and how absurdly they have converted it into a downright glorification of God, lengthened out as far as human nature may be supposed able to render such service at any one time, is remarkably clear in the commendation given by Paley to the liturgy of the Church of England. He says, "The style throughout is excellent; calm without coldness, and though every where sedate oftentimes affecting. The pauses of the service are disposed at proper intervals. The transitions from one office of devotion to another, from confession to prayer, from prayer to thanksgiving, from thanksgiving to hearing the word, *are contrived like scenes in the drama to supply the mind with a succession of diversified engagements*," &c. According to this exposition the worship of God consists in occupying the minds of the worshippers with a variety of different ideas, so as to prevent *tedium* during a prescribed period of time. Such reasoning as Paley's is founded upon an utter misapprehension of christian privilege. Jehovah has promised to hear and answer *earnest* prayer and supplication, and hence if a man has nothing to ask from the condescension of his Creator he had better say nothing; for God is not glorified by men who spin out a certain number of minutes in services that are based upon the capacity of human nature to be thus employed, without being wearied by the homage they undertake to render.

It would be well if christians remembered the exhortation of Solomon, (*Eccles.* v. 1, 2,) "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear (*ὑποτίθεσθαι*, *obey*, *i. e.* God's requirements) than to give *the sacrifice of fools*: for they consider not they do evil. *Be not rash with thy mouth*, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven and thou upon earth; *therefore let thy words be few*."

the common faith, and therefore the sermon, lecture or exhortation should be regarded as the essential object for which they have come together. That short and heartfelt prayer should be offered to Jehovah on such occasions is highly suitable, as imploring his blessing upon their endeavor to understand and do what he has required of them. It is also highly suitable that such an assembly should in their social capacity express their devout gratitude for mercies received, or that they should ask his favor and providence in behalf of the civil institutions of their country, or for any other mercy or blessing whether as pertaining to existing things, or to the further extension of Christ's kingdom. It is also highly proper that a grateful assembly should magnify the mercy and goodness of Jehovah by the warmer expression of religious gratitude in the devout singing of suitable hymns. Provided this be done by the congregation through the intellectual impulse of devotional feelings, and not as a prescribed duty, we may suppose it not unacceptable to Jehovah. But choir singing, or instrumental music on such occasions, are preposterous acts of will-worship, so absurd in themselves that it is wonderful how they can be tolerated for a moment by truly devout persons.*

The greatest cause of misapprehension on this subject of church music arises from the very erroneous notion that the Psalms of David were inspired of the Holy Spirit in order that they might be sung in the temple at Jerusalem as a part of the divine worship.

But I trust I have sufficiently shewn (Vol. I. 465, &c.) that the musical choir and the singing of psalms at the temple was an unauthorized innovation of David's, and expressly contrary to the law of Moses, who had forbidden the Jews to add any thing to the institutions that Jehovah had communicated to them at Mount Sinai.

In the next place, though the majority of the Psalms may have been written by David, yet we have no authority by which we can determine that fact. This indeed may not be a matter of much importance since they are unexceptionable as to their doctrine and sentiments, with perhaps the single instance of Psalm cix. which

* The Church of England in her purer day, when the homilies were written, bore a very decided testimony on this subject. Thus the homily, "On the place and time of prayer," after mentioning the *piping, singing, chanting, and playing upon organs*, which was in use before the Reformation, exhorts the hearers "greatly to rejoice, and give thanks to God that our churches are delivered out of these things that displeased God so sore, and so filthily defiled the holy house and place of prayer."

however may be susceptible of a different interpretation than it now bears in our version.

But after making every allowance on the subject, and admitting that many of the Psalms were composed by David to be sung in the temple service, yet it is evident that all of them were not calculated for such a purpose, for they are not all of a devotional character however pious the sentiments are that they express. Thus for instance with the first Psalm: No one can object to the sentiments there expressed, yet certainly it is not suitable for a worshipping assembly to sing as being to the praise or glory of God, for it is not addressed to God, but is the mere poetically devout meditation of a pious man. Why then should a worshipping assembly propose to sing a hymn to the "*praise and glory of God*," when there is not a word of praise or glory in the composition? In the name of common sense, why not select a psalm or hymn that is to the praise or glory of God, and not absurdly propose to do something, which is actually set aside by the very hymn that follows as the consummation of the proposition.

Psalms xiv. xli. xlix. lii. liii. lviii. lxxxvii. xci. cx. cxiv. cxv. cxii. cxxviii. cxxix. cxxxii. cxxxiii. cxxxvii. are also very nearly of the same character as the first Psalm, unobjectionable as to sentiment, but unsuitable as compositions for the direct worship of God on the part of a christian assembly.

I have been induced to make the Psalms of David the subject of these remarks, as it would be wholly impossible to take notice of the large collections of modern hymns made use of by our various Protestant churches. But the principle being determined that when a hymn is proposed to be sung "*to the praise and glory of God*," that it shall be one to that end, we are thus furnished with a rule that on a mere general estimate, I should think would strike out at least half of the hymns in our modern compilations. This subject I hope will commend itself to the understanding of all religious persons, and induce a reformation in this particular which I should presume every devout christian cannot but approve, since there is nothing to justify a practice that is directly in opposition to the object proposed.

As to the doctrinal sentiments of our modern hymns, they are too frequently the embodiment of mere sectarian theological dogmas. On this subject however I shall say nothing, for having already fully expressed myself as to points of doctrine, the character of the hymn in that particular is necessarily to be judged by the same standard.

As the assembling of christians together on the Sunday should only be for instruction, mutual encouragement, or exhortation, it necessarily follows that if there be any individual in the society capable of saying any thing profitable to the congregation, whether as strengthening their faith, exposing error, explaining the Scripture, or making known the wisdom and power of Jehovah, or any other matter directly edifying, common sense would seem to indicate the advantage of requiring such individuals to exercise the ability they possess to the instruction of their fellow men. If this therefore be the most advantageous mode for the common edification, it will require no argument to shew how very defective the prevailing system is that commits all this work to a single person, who as rector, pastor, or what ever he may be called, cannot possibly exercise but his single gift let it be ever so great. This indeed he could still continue to exercise, if such a mode be preferred as an essential feature to a christian congregation, and yet he could at the same time be most advantageously sustained by the assistance perhaps of some ten or twenty intellectual and pious individuals of the congregation.

It may possibly be suggested that the mode I have recommended as to how the exercises of a church assembly should be conducted by the assistance of many individuals, has already been tried in primitive times, and that it had failed according to my own shewing in a former page. This is indeed true, but when it failed through human misconduct, was a better mode adopted in its place? No, a mode decidedly worse succeeded, and one still worse followed, until the corruption became consummated in the establishment of the Roman hierarchy. The Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century introduced only an improvement in this matter, but it did not extend to a remedy of prevailing abuses. The influences of popery were so inveterately fixed in the christian mind at the time of the Reformation, that the Protestants were unable to advance beyond a certain degree in their reformations. But to us of the present day it is far otherwise, there are no impediments to our adopting those forms or institutions that are best suited to the edification of a christian society, and none I should apprehend is more beneficial than the one I have suggested, and which we have further shewn was the one followed by the apostles themselves. We admit they established no positive constitution of ecclesiastical forms for the future government of christian societies, yet it is very reasonable to suppose they adopted the one that in their view was most expedient. Their example in this particular therefore is

superior to any other example exhibited to men on this subject, and if the body of christians will not be governed by their reason in such matters, they at least had better follow the better example.

It is impossible however to adopt any system that shall be not only perfect in itself but which shall also be able to maintain that perfection always. The weakness, the ignorance, or the presumption of mankind as enduring the trials of a probationary condition, are continually manifested in the gradual deterioration of all institutions whether human or divine, unless counteracted by a continual watchfulness and reference to the principles recognized in the Scripture. It constitutes a part of the intellectual discipline of pious and intellectual men, that they shall exert themselves to prevent the innovations that proceed from human weakness or presumption. We therefore ought not only to establish our ecclesiastical systems upon the most rational considerations of their usefulness, but we must also at the same time be most careful to preserve in all their purity of operation, whatever forms that distinctly harmonize with the fundamental principles of the New Testament writings.

The recognition of the doctrine that our Sunday services are only for purposes of mutual instruction and edification, would also do away with that false and superstitious notion almost universally prevalent among us, that the church building is a place peculiarly favored by the divine presence. Common as this opinion is, I do not think there is any thing less inferrible from the biblical writings, for there is not a single passage either in the Old or New Testament to justify the supposition. Under the Jewish Dispensation as we have previously shewn there was but one temple for the whole land of Judea, which properly consisted of but two small apartments into which none but the priests had access, and these but at stated times. All the homage that was there rendered to Jehovah except the burning of incense in the Holy Place, which the people never saw, was performed around the great altar that stood in the open air.

The Jewish temple therefore was properly only a court or open square, where the people assembled to offer their silent prayers to Jehovah, and consequently not one of those analogies that modern ecclesiastics have inferred from the ritual of the Jewish temple, are in the least degree applicable to our christian churches, and to shew still further how unreasonable such analogies are, let us remember there was but one temple, such as it was, for the use of a people

who in the days of Solomon may have amounted to five or six millions.

It is therefore an unfounded notion, the result both of will-worship and superstition, wholly unjustifiable from the Scripture, to suppose that the millions of churches that may be in existence throughout Christendom, are any wise more holy than any other buildings, and the act of men who endeavor to convey any such notion by undertaking to consecrate or put apart a church building as a holy place, at which it is supposed Jehovah will manifest a peculiar presence, appears to me an act of the utmost presumption which is continually reproved by the casualties that take place with churches as with ordinary houses.*

All these notions concerning the sanctity of church buildings being set aside, we can only regard them as places for the accommodation of devout persons, who resort there not for the worship of Jehovah, but for purposes of instruction or edification.

I am the more strongly impelled to call the serious attention of my readers to the subject of church edifices, from the circumstance that many of the churches built in the United States during the past few years, have been constructed upon architectural models that involve not only an unjustifiable expenditure of money, but they are also expressly contemplated for promoting superstitious feelings in those who it is supposed will assemble in such buildings.

This is especially the case with gothic churches, the invention of the darkest and most superstitious time the christian world has ever seen, when nearly all spirituality of religion being unknown, the mere imagination was excited by the faneiful proprieties of an ecclesiastical opera house, that substantially only represented religious melo-dramas.

Instead therefore of entering a church under intellectual considerations that they are about, on their own theory, to hold communion with the sovereign of the universe, from whom they are to

* During the past year, (A. D. 1851) without going further back, we have had this matter exhibited to us in two striking instances. At Danville, (Pa.) while a congregation were kneeling in prayer just before the sacrament was to be administered, the church was struck with lightning, which killed one person, and considerably injured eight or nine other individuals.

A church also was struck by lightning at New London, (Ct.) in which the minister was killed in the pulpit, and several other persons severely hurt. As we have no justification whatever to suppose that these calamities were judgments inflicted by God, we have a full demonstration of the fact, that churches are not regarded by him as being more holy as edifices than barns or warehouses.

implore pardon for sin, and the sanctification of their nature by the renewing of the Holy Spirit, these most unthinking Protestants have erected churches, whose gloomy decorations, stained glass windows, solemn strains of music from organs and well drilled musical choirs, lead them away from all intellectual perceptions of the condescension of their Creator, and plunges them into the gross delusion of supposing that they are worshipping God, when they are merely gratifying their own eyes and ears.*

The strange oversight of men as to the consequences of such irrational conduct, the false and paralogistic reasonings with which they justify the devices of their imagination on so important a matter as communion with their Creator, induces me to urge upon them a deep consideration of what they either have done or may yet propose to themselves to do. The decay of spiritual apprehensions concerning their religious condition, or the right exercise of their privileges, I think may be estimated in a congregation according to their proceeding on such subjects, as distinctly as the growth of a worldly spirit is indicated by the actions of an individual. As I believe the establishment of a choir is one exhibition of the decrease of the true principles of Christianity in a congregation, the addition of an organ or other musical instruments, manifests the existence of a still greater amount of spiritual insensibility to divine things. If to these matters be added the building of an expensively decorated church, and above all of a gothic church, I know not where their absurd will-worship will carry them. To expect that the spirit of Jehovah will continue to abide among a community who have adopted practices so wholly unsustained by any approbation of prophets or apostles, and so contrary in their char-

* That I am in no error on this subject I subjoin the following extract from a Baltimore newspaper published in the year 1849.

“*Easter Sunday.*—Yesterday being the return of the season upon which the resurrection of the Saviour is commemorated by the Catholic and Protestant Episcopal churches, a large number of those denominations were in attendance upon the exercises which were therein conducted—indeed, nearly all the churches were crowded to their utmost capacity. At — church, the Rev. —, delivered an able and impressive discourse, based upon *Acts*, ch. ii. 32: ‘This Jesus has God raised up, whereof we are all witnesses.’ It is needless to remark that the sermon was of that character which gives interest and value to his ministerial labors. The talented choir, accompanied by the organ, performed a number of rich and delightful compositions with fine effect. ‘*Te Deum laudamus*,’ ‘We praise thee, O Lord; we acknowledge thee to be the Lord,’ and ‘Christ our passover is sacrificed for us,’ &c. were executed with peculiar sweetness. The congregation of — church on — street, was unusually large, and the ceremonies very imposing, solemn High Mass being officiated by Rev. —, accompanied by choice and appropriate music from the choir.” See also our note to Vol. I. 467.

acter to the intellectual genius of Christianity, is to expect what is directly contrary to what Jehovah has every where announced in the Scriptures, as well as what he has already exhibited in his providential dealings towards mankind. As it is however impossible for me to say any thing more emphatic on this subject than I have already urged upon the readers' consideration throughout this work, I shall conclude by simply referring him to *Isaiah* lxvi. 1—4, and the direct inference that any reflecting man ought to make upon that striking exposition,* for what is true as to God's proceeding towards the Jews, must be equally true in principle as applied to christians.

At the close of each investigation concerning the several dispensations of Jehovah to mankind, I have heretofore added some brief views as to the extent of their influence; and also shewn, that however perversely men may have acted, that nevertheless the purport of Jehovah's scheme was in no manner affected by human misconduct. As the christian dispensation has not terminated, we can give no such view of it as we did in the case of the preceding dispensations, yet still it is important that we should direct the attention of our readers to some of the phenomena attending its past development, in order to vindicate it from certain unjustifiable conclusions which have been deduced by deists and sceptics from its previous history.

Notwithstanding the excellence of its institutions, and the great and beneficial influence that Christianity has undeniably exerted in the world, yet it is equally evident that its influence has been very limited and partial. Since its origin, eighteen hundred years ago, it has extended itself comparatively, to but a small portion of mankind, and the history of its progressive establishment even among them, during the greater portion of that time, has been characterized by the remarkable circumstance, that no religious system has ever prevailed in the earth that has been accompanied with so great an amount of intolerance, persecution, and bloodshed. As such conditions of things are asserted by deists and sceptics to be wholly inconsistent with the infinite excellencies and omnipotence of the

* Even the intellectual heathens recognized this principle most distinctly. Thus Cicero (*De Legibus, lib. ii.*) remarks, "Approach the gods with purity—appear before them in the spirit of devotion—remove riches" (*i. e. expensive decorations*) "from their temples; whoever does otherwise shall suffer the vengeance of heaven."

divine Creator of all things, it is therefore in their estimation utterly incredible that Christianity can rest upon a divine foundation.

But this inference, plausible as it may seem to be to those who make it, is nevertheless wholly erroneous, however true the facts are upon which it is predicated, for the deists have assumed as the basis for their deduction, that Jehovah in making the revolutions recorded in the Scriptures, is also pledged to establish a condition of things among mankind conformable to his requirements from them, either by the direct exercise of his omnipotence or indirectly through the instrumentality of secondary causes.

Such a view, however, of the Christian Dispensation is wholly unjustifiable, for infinite as Jehovah is in his omnipotence and excellency of attributes, he has in the revelations recorded in the Scriptures only commended certain principles to human observance as free agents placed by him in a probationary condition, with full liberty to act as they may see fit. If they will regulate their intellectual and moral action by the revelations made them in the Scriptures, they shall not only obtain the greatest amount of happiness in the present life, but they shall also by such conduct qualify themselves for an everlasting inheritance in the world to come.

Nothing therefore can be plainer than that Jehovah promises nothing in the Scriptures to mankind but in proportion to the exactness and earnestness with which they shall comply with his recommendations. If they are diligent in this work they shall receive all the assistance promised by God, but if they are negligent, if they disregard, or if they pervert the recommendations made by him, he will not counteract by his omnipotence the ill consequences of their folly or misjudgment. Such interference would evidently wholly subvert human free agency, the foundation of that pre-determined scheme appointed by him for their intellectual and moral development.

The objections therefore of deists and sceptics as respects the partial influence of the Scripture writings upon mankind since the promulgation of Christianity, or as regards the crimes committed in its name, are altogether fallacious, being founded upon an utter misapprehension respecting the nature of Jehovah's providential superintendence over the system of things announced to mankind in the Scriptures.

But in having made such a false conclusion concerning the system taught in the Scriptures, are deists and sceptics to be censured? Why have they been left in this state of ignorance? Why have not christians corrected the deistical misapprehension by a

true exposition on the subject? The only reply to be made to the question is, that the theologians themselves have authorized this gross misrepresentation of the theory maintained in the Scripture writings; for they have almost universally taught that the foundations of Christianity are based upon the fact, that mankind are born into the world so wholly depraved and corrupt since Adam's transgression in Paradise, that they cannot even think a good thought of themselves. To reconcile such a doctrine, therefore, with the fact of human probation, which is so explicitly announced in the Scriptures, it then became absolutely necessary that theologians should represent Jehovah as counteracting this universal depravity by his direct influences upon mankind both in their individual and social capacities. They therefore have in the most dogmatic manner inculcated the doctrine, that God operates upon individuals by a *preventing grace*, which changes their wills, subdues their hearts, and brings them into covenant relations with him as their Creator. The condition of things as thus established, they further assert is henceforth sustained by his direct providential interference in every matter that involves human agencies, individual or social, whether as producing a beneficial result, or as opposing an evil condition of things.

From such a theological exposition as this, it follows necessarily that as Jehovah is assumed to accomplish every thing beneficial in the world by the immediate exercise of his grace and providential superintendence, so it becomes wholly incomprehensible, not to say incredible, how Christianity, if it be from his appointment, should, in *the first place*, have had such partial success in converting mankind, and *secondly*, how the most shocking crimes, persecution, and bloodshed, should have so largely accompanied that Christianity which theologians have represented as being only established and sustained in the world through the direct exercise of Jehovah's grace, and the immediate interference of his all-subduing, all-controlling power.

I trust however, that in the preceding pages I have fully refuted the theological assertion that the Scriptures teach the doctrines of Original Sin and of Preventing Grace. I have furthermore shewn not only from the Scriptures themselves, but by the whole history of Jehovah's moral superintendence of our world, that as mankind have been created by him in a probationary condition as intellectual and moral free agents, so he does not over-rule human affairs by any direct interference, nor by the secret influences of his grace; but that the condition of mankind whether for good or for evil, is

determined by their own action. If mankind therefore have failed in the enjoyment of that happiness or welfare that ought to have been anticipated as the fruits of a divine economy emanating from the Creator of all things, it is because they have not regarded the recommendations made by him. They have preferred the immediate gratification of their pride or sensuality, rather than regulate themselves by a wise self-discipline that postpones indulgence in order to make it more perfect and enduring; a mode of conduct however which every wise and prudent man must advocate, even if the transactions of the present life only be regarded.

How far the corruption of the theory of Christianity by the means of the doctrines of Original Sin and Preventing Grace has had an injurious effect on society, I apprehend it is not difficult to estimate. It has perplexed and worried christians with irreconcilable speculations, it has given a wrong direction to their efforts in preaching the gospel to their unconverted fellow men, and it has encouraged the thoughtless and irreligious to postpone the work of their salvation. But as concerns the atheists and deists, notwithstanding their apparent objections on the subject, I do not believe over one in a thousand was ever influenced in his unbelief by any misconception as to the theory advocated in the Scriptures. As far as my experience extends I have found that whenever I shewed them what was the true and simple exposition of the Scriptures, they then immediately shifted their objections from against the theory of the system to the arguments and proofs by which the credibility of the promulgators of the system was shewn to be established. It became perfectly clear to me by their caviling and captious exceptions, that they were far more anxious to reject and condemn than to ascertain whether the Scriptures were really from God.

With respect to the persecutions, bloodshed and crimes that have been accomplished in the name of Christianity, it is only necessary to remark that no intellectual deist has ever regarded such proceedings but as being directly contrary to the whole teaching of the gospel. If christians therefore under the influence of ignorance, bigotry or fanaticism, have acted directly contrary to both the letter and the spirit of the Scriptures, it is surely the most unreasonable thing in the world to consider such conduct to impeach the claim of the Scriptures to be a record of revelations made by God to mankind. If the Scriptures no where recognize the institution of a divinely commissioned clergy, but on the contrary when every inference deducible from these writings is hostile

to such deduction, can the Scriptures with any rationality be charged with the persecution and crimes that have followed as the consequence of men having recognized a divinely commissioned clergy, who as the Holy Catholic Church were regarded as having authority from God to expound the Scriptures, and whose decrees the civil powers undertook to enforce by fire and sword. If the gospel teaches nothing but universal love and forbearance among mankind as brethren, how can any sane man suppose that the bigotry of churches, or the wrong-headed acts of individual christians can impeach the divine claims of the Scriptures, which expressly condemns all such misconduct.

Deists and sceptics however may say that God cannot have appointed a condition of things liable to such abuses. This assertion we have fully discussed in our preliminary disquisitions, and have shewn its absurd presumption. God is the best judge of the modes through which his purposes are to be accomplished, and it is preposterous for men to claim the right to express their opinions as to that matter.

If mankind according to the theory of the Scriptures have been placed by Jehovah in a probationary state in this life, every phenomenon pertaining to their intellectual and moral condition is perfectly comprehensible. The whole scheme of revelation is predicated upon the fact of human capacities as intellectual and moral free agents, who have been left to themselves to act as they may see fit. If they will strictly conform with Jehovah's requirements as exhibited in the Scriptures, all things shall tend to the establishment of human welfare, but if men will not regulate their conduct by those principles which Jehovah has condescended to announce to them as being essential to their happiness, then every evil and injurious consequence will follow; not simply because they disobey his injunctions, but because his recommendations have proceeded from his infinite perceptions of what course of conduct will best promote human welfare in the present life, or as disciplining them in the best manner for the enjoyment of a happy condition hereafter.

Christianity as in the case of Jehovah's preceding dispensations, is not to be established by the exercise of his omnipotence in subduing mankind before him. It depends upon the manner in which those who are converted to it shall communicate its influences to their fellow-men. If they corrupt the doctrines and institutions inculcated by Christ or his apostles, and teach such matters as being Christianity, evil and pernicious consequences inevitably fol-

low, as the whole past history of the last thousand years abundantly exhibits. Such a condition of things is inseparable from the phenomena of a probationary state, and he must be the most unreasonable of men who requires that Jehovah shall accomplish through his omnipotence what he by his omnipotent decree only offers to human free agency.

But though Christianity has not had that extensive influence upon mankind that ought to have been anticipated from its admirable principles and institutions, it has nevertheless exerted a vast and beneficial influence. As concerns individuals, those who have endeavored to live as Jehovah has recommended them, have ever found happiness and peace as far as the phenomena of our probationary condition admits. Those that observe Jehovah's recommendations have been sustained by him in all their trials, and through his assistance they have been enabled to meet the most adverse conditions of things with serenity of mind. They have encountered even death itself with the exulting confidence that it only brought them nearer to the enjoyment of an eternal inheritance. Beyond such support and consolation no devout christian could look, for his position in the present world being that of an imperfect, short-lived creature undergoing intellectual and moral discipline as a free agent, as such, he is not only exposed to the inconveniences necessarily pertaining to such a condition, but he is as necessarily involved in the consequences of the social action of those around him, whether for good or for evil.

In the exercise of individual agencies, or through the combined action of many devout christians, an unceasing beneficial influence however has ever been exerted upon mankind since the promulgation of the gospel. The consequence has been the establishment of that intellectual and moral condition of things that so eminently distinguishes Christendom from all other regions of the earth. No proof is necessary as to this fact, for no one can look abroad into the world and not recognize it in every particular that regards the comfort or happiness of mankind, the security of life, liberty and property, and the daily improving condition whether intellectual and moral of all classes of men living within the reach of christian influences.

Atheists and deists may scoff on the subject, and enlarge upon the amount of wickedness still existing in Christendom, as if the preaching of the gospel ought necessarily to convert the irreligious, who at the same time assail the very principles and doctrines that are offered to their consideration. It is a most extraordinary view

of the subject when unbelievers reproach Christianity *for not having reformed themselves*; for that unprincipled and flagitious portion of society that exists in Christendom are not christians, but are the atheists and deists in the practical application of their principles, either in the open disregard of righteousness, or who as hypocrites have assumed the christian name in order to impose on the upright and benevolent. Of all the misrepresentations of Christianity that is the grossest which impugns its origin for not having effected that moral revolution upon free agents, which it is the constant effort of such as atheists and deists to counterwork, and where even the very efforts of christian virtue and benevolence are only mentioned by them to be scoffed at and ridiculed.*

But whatever may be the conduct of men under the phenomena attending the development of the Christian Dispensation, Jehovah's scheme is in no manner affected by their misjudgment or their profligacy. The gospel has been expressly addressed to mankind as being intellectual and moral free agents, who are to determine by their own inferences whether they will conform to its requirements or not. It does not signify how many have, or still do reject it, for in the conduct of individually righteous men the future kingdom of heaven will be fully supplied with befitting subjects. This, as we have repeatedly shewn, constitutes the essential feature of our probationary condition, and through which every man shall be rewarded according to the character of that society for which he has qualified himself.

* Though it is difficult for a christian to bear with patience the insulting misrepresentations that are continually made by deists respecting the motives and conduct of those who profess to believe the gospel, yet sometimes the malignity of such scoffers overshoots the mark, and exhibits them in their true colors as men destitute of both truth and honor. Thus Mr. Lawrence in his *Lectures on Physiology, Zoology, and Nat. Hist. of Man*, page 360, says, "to the disgrace of London, even in this pious age of societies for suppressing vice and distributing Bibles, a philosophic foreigner has found in our streets a proof of the effects of *too early venereal excitement* in enlarging the (female) breast," &c.

The malignity with which such a scoff was made is only equal to its mendacity, for allowing facts to be as he has represented them, and which he hypocritically affects to condemn, what has such a condition of things to do with the efforts of well-meaning and pious men to counteract vice and immorality. The malice that dictated the remark betrayed itself; and yet if the insulted feelings of a christian society had punished this insolent lecturer, by withholding their patronage, he and his brethren would have assumed the utmost indignation against intolerance and persecution. In other words they claim the privilege to insult others with impunity.

I have now completed the task I proposed to accomplish in writing this work, and through much discussion of perplexed controversies have brought the whole subject into such a harmonious and consistent point of view, that I trust it will commend itself to the understanding of every reader who sincerely desires to ascertain truth. But as just observed, since our exposition has been involved with many perplexing discussions, it may be proper in order to leave the subject fairly before the reader, that I should recapitulate the prominent matters investigated, and the deductions made from them.

I have shewn that from an examination of the visible world, nothing can be inferred concerning the nature, attributes, or purposes of the Creator of the universe. Though his infinite power and skill are manifested by his works, yet that inference is so clogged by the non-exhibition of any moral superintendence of the world, that the merits of the conclusion to be deduced from the whole subject are so entirely divided between the utterly opposite inferences of the atheists and deists, that it is impossible to attain to any firm or certain conviction. Our investigations on Natural Theology, and exhibition of the termination of all philosophic speculation in absolute scepticism, I apprehend establishes the conclusions we have made in the clearest point of view.

In this state of utter perplexity and doubtfulness we took up the Scripture writings, and in them we found a full solution of every difficulty unsolved in the discussions between the atheists and deists. The Scriptures inform us, that Jehovah the Creator of all things, infinite in power and all excellence of moral attributes, has placed mankind as intellectual and moral free agents in a probationary condition, in which they are, through their voluntary self-discipline, to qualify themselves for a future state of existence, which will be either happy or miserable according to their own action in the case. If the Scriptures are revelations from God, every matter is explained that concerns either human conduct, or Jehovah's position towards them whether in his providential, or in his apparently non-providential superintendence. In either case it leaves no perplexity as to the infinite power, wisdom, and excellence of his nature and attributes.

To prove that the Scriptures are revelations from God, we have produced through an analysis of the institutions of Moses, and the functions and conduct of the priesthood and prophets, an amount of evidence as to the credibility of the Scripture writings which I should presume to be irresistible. It comprehends an amount of

circumstantial evidence of unimpeachable disinterested integrity wholly unparalleled in the history of human action; and when this astonishing amount of evidence *simply sustains a moral system, the most perfect for promoting human welfare and happiness that can be conceived of*—it seems to me impossible for any unprejudiced man to hold a rational doubt as to the fact that the Scriptures are from divine revelation.

In the next place, I have shewn that in the fact of mankind's probationary condition as intellectual and moral free agents left to themselves, there is nothing perplexing in the circumstance that they have in various instances corrupted the system of things appointed in the Scriptures for human observance. Hence as free agents, men have with a perverse ingenuity often worked up schemes of religious observance for themselves, which though seemingly founded upon the teaching of the Scriptures, were in reality perversions of truth, and sometimes in their consequences induced an action directly the contrary to what the Scriptures inculcated.

To vindicate the Scriptures from the obloquy thus brought upon them by those who perverted their meaning, at the same time that they professed to follow their teaching, I have gone into very full investigations as to what the Scriptures do require from human faith and obedience, and I trust the simplicity, harmony, and consistency of the expositions made on these subjects are so striking, that no intellectual christian can mistrust the substantial truth of what I have laid before the reader as being the plain requirements of the Scripture writings.

Now to the array of proof that I have given, what objection have atheists, deists, or sceptics to make? I can imagine nothing unless it may be said, that after all I have written, I have not made a demonstration that removes their unbelief. To such a remark it is evident no reply can be made, as no one can undertake to prove the cogency of any process of reasoning. I shall therefore only observe, that as an absolute demonstration of moral or religious truth cannot be made, since it would be inconsistent with a state of intellectual and moral probation, so, the intellectual responsibility of mankind can only be determined in the choice they make between probable opinions or inferences.* He that chooses the one

* By the term *probable* we do not mean the vulgar, but the philosophic sense of the word, or has been stated by Dugald Stewart. "The word *probable* when thus used, does not imply any *deficiency* in the proof, but only marks the particular nature of that proof, as distinguished from another species of evidence. It is opposed not to what is *certain*, but to what admits of being *demonstrated after the*

the least probable, either wants intellectual sagacity or is influenced by unjustifiable considerations. No one however can deceive the judge of mankind as to this matter, and considering the enormous consequences depending upon human action in the case, I can only recommend the infidel reader to re-estimate the considerations through which he has determined that the Scriptures are not a revelation from the Creator of the Universe.

As respects the christian reader, I have nothing to say in vindication of the expositions made by me concerning the system of things that I apprehend to be taught in the volume of Scripture writings, for I have stated at every step my reasons for coming to such conclusions. I can only say for myself on these matters, that as I have been fully aware of the responsibility assumed by the publication of this work, so I have diligently exerted myself not only to ascertain what was the truth, but with the full determination to be faithful in announcing the whole truth.

manner of mathematicians. This differs from the meaning annexed to the same word in popular discourses; according to which, whatever event is said to be *probable* is understood to be expected with some degree of doubt. The existence of the city of Pekin, and the reality of Cæsar's assassination, which the philosopher classes with *probabilities*, because they rest solely upon the evidence of testimony, are universally classed with *certainties* by the rest of mankind. This difference between the technical meaning of the word *probability* as employed by logicians, and the notion usually attached to it in the business of life, has led many authors of the highest name in some of the most important arguments which can employ human reason, to overlook that irresistible evidence which was placed before their eyes, in search of another mode of proof altogether unattainable in moral inquiries, &c.



APPENDIX.

ARTICLE No. I.

See Vol. I. page 29.

ON THE NATURE OF MOTIVES.

THOUGH we do not propose to make any extended discussion concerning the philosophic controversy on the subject of Liberty and Necessity, yet as the argument of the Necessitarians rests ultimately upon a fallacy respecting the use of the term *motives*, which may be exposed by a few observations, I have thought it expedient to state them to the reader who may be unacquainted with the subject.

It is sufficiently clear to every one that man is a being of limited capacity and power. We are surrounded on all sides with objects whether physical or intellectual, that oppose themselves to our exertions, and which remain immovable or incomprehensible to every successive generation of men. We are in other words, restricted by our physical and intellectual constitution to modes of life and exercises of our intelligence, within certain bounds imposed upon us by the express appointment of our Creator.

Thus far man may be said to be subject to necessity. We have received a certain constitution from our Creator which is to be excited into action by those objects which he has appointed as exciting causes, and which continue to act upon us as long as our life endures.

But though we are thus constituted, we are by the divine appointment, free agents, *at liberty within the bounds of our organization*, to take those courses of life or to adopt those opinions which are approved by our judgment, be they what they may, and which may exhibit a very great variety of character as compared among themselves. Thus, for instance, we must eat, drink, and be clothed, or we die:—but we *are at liberty* to appease or gratify these necessities by a great variety of meats and drinks, and of the various articles used for raiment. There is no *necessity* which impels us to choose one more than the other; we therefore make our selection according to our judgment or inclination, and which we may also resist if we please, and live in abstinence from every thing grateful as long as life may last.

The intellectual part of our organization is precisely under the same regulations: it is susceptible of various impulses through which the individual is excited to those acts in which some peculiar gratification consists, whether it be in action or repose, or in any modification of them. The means of gratifying the intellectual principle are many and various, and the will is at liberty to adopt whatever mode the understanding may prefer, in order to obtain the accomplishment of our desire.

But here I shall be told by the advocates of the doctrine of necessity, that the will has no such liberty whether in choosing its animal or intellectual gratification, but that we are impelled by motives to take a particular course, which is always determined by the *strongest motive*, and not by any free will or choice of our own.

Now, however plausible this argument may seem, there cannot be the least difficulty in showing that it is a simple *sophism*, whose force consists in the equivocal meaning given to the term *strongest motive*. To show this, let us ask what is meant by the term *strongest motive*; does it imply the wisest, the most prudent, most judicious, or most conscientious inducement for action? It does not imply any such meaning. The *strongest motive* of the Necessitarians implies that it is the *prevailing motive*, no matter whether it be good or bad, wise or foolish, beneficial or injurious.

Since men are undeniably influenced by *motives* to act in some manner or other, so it does not signify what the character of the motive may be, that motive the Necessitarians assert is the strongest. But why strongest?—why, because it prevails. *Strongest motive*, then, is clearly synonymous with *prevailing motive*.

The use of the word *strongest*, then, is a begging of the question, and its force as an argument with the Necessitarians against the doctrine of free agency, lies in the equivocation of implying *prevailing*. As every action of man is induced by some motive or other, so some motive, or other must *prevail* over other motives. This we all admit must be the case: the advocates of liberty insist the motive prevails according to the intelligent estimation we make on the subject, whether as a matter of gratification, advantage or duty.

The advocates of necessity say the motive prevails because it is the *strongest*. Now if they will define *strongest* to imply any other meaning than *prevailing*, it can be proved against them on all sides that men do not follow the strongest motive; and if they merely give it the significance of *prevailing*, then their argument amounts to this, that a man will follow whatever he will follow, that he will do whatever he will do, which is a conclusion that no one can deny, but which it would be absurd in the last degree to consider as justifying the doctrine of necessity.

But we have a further objection to urge against the doctrine of the Necessitarians as respects the signification to be attached to the term *motive*, for their assumption as to its meaning is a palpable *petitio principii* that covers the whole ground of controversy. Thus the celebrated Jonathan Edwards, the most renowned advocate of the doctrine, says in his *Discourse on the Will*, that he means by the term *motive*, “the whole of that which moves, excites, or invites the mind to volition, whether that be one thing singly, or many

things conjunctly." This definition constitutes the radical fallacy of his whole work, for he uses the term as comprehending a variety of particulars that are not motives at all, as we shall now proceed to shew.

In the first place, *the constitutional impulses of our organization*, whether physical or intellectual, are not motives, but inherent phenomena pertaining to the mere essential constitution of our being. Hence as respects the impulses of our physical organization we are precisely like the beasts, yet no one can say that the beasts are influenced by *motives* when they seek to fulfil the functions of their constitutional organization. In like manner therefore the constitutional impulses of human nature cannot be regarded as motives, but as the sources of the desires, hopes, fears, &c. through which mankind are excited to *intellectual action*. Hence the phenomena of our rational life: we attempt to regulate our constitutional impulses by intellectual considerations, *i. e. motives*, so that we may obtain what we desire or avoid what we dislike.

Furthermore, to shew the utter difference between our constitutional impulses and *motives*, we remark that these impulses that give rise to all desires have no moral character, for they are the same in the good or the wicked, the wise or the foolish, the prudent or the injudicious. But *motives* have the most decided intellectual or moral character, and hence nothing is more common than the observation of a man's *motives* being good or wicked, benevolent or selfish, honorable or unprincipled. It therefore follows conclusively that whatever be our constitutional impulses they merely excite us to act. Whether that action be moral or immoral, honorable or base, does not depend upon the impulse, but upon the intellectual considerations, *i. e.* the *motives*, through which individuals act, in order to obtain any proposed object or result.

It is saying nothing to the purpose that men continually do things they cannot intellectually approve of. This we readily grant, and the reason of such conduct is evident; some men will prefer present or prospective gratification to every consideration of sense, or prudence, and this absurd determination constitutes the *motive* under which they direct their action, not from the strength of the *motive*, but from their determination to disregard any other consideration on the subject than the proposed gratification. If there was any room for cavil in such cases, it would be to ascribe their conduct to the power of the propensity, or constitutional impulse. But this cannot be sustained, because there are rational and moral ways by which every constitutional impulse may be gratified, and therefore whatever course of action be followed, it is because the understanding intellectually approves of such a course, and consequently acts upon such a motive.

No man for instance has any constitutional impulse to lie, steal, or commit adultery, yet under the impulses of his constitutional nature, he may be excited or tempted by the expectation of advantage or pleasure, to lie, steal, or commit adultery. The impulse or temptation however, even in such cases is not criminal, it only becomes so when he determines to gratify it. Good men are tempted like the wicked, but they resist the temptation upon moral or religious considerations. It is this condition of things that consti-

tutes our probationary state, the end of which will be, that God will reward those who seek after perfection through well doing.

In the second place, we object to Edward's assumption as to the nature of motives, that *arguments, reasons, and other intellectual considerations*, by which we discuss or estimate any proposed mode of action, are not *motives*; for though they suggest motives they are not so themselves. That this is the case is evident. Suppose a man deliberating with himself as to some proposed action or conduct of his life: whatever considerations encourage him to act, are counterbalanced by opposite considerations that warn him not to act. As long therefore as the individual is undetermined as to his future conduct on the subject, he is without a motive, but as soon as he determines his course of action, that determination constitutes the *motive* under which he acts for the future. His motive therefore is an intellectual choice approved by his understanding after a comparison of the several considerations that either justify or condemn the course he henceforth intends to pursue.

After these corrections of the significance ordinarily attached to the term *motive*, we can come to no other conclusion on the subject than that motives are those *intellectual determinations* by which men as rational creatures regulate their action, so as to obtain some contemplated object or result. It is the same thing whether we act or refuse to act, for in either case we anticipate by such conduct the accomplishment of something that we desire.

Again, whatever may be the proposed end that constitutes a motive for human action, it is pursued only so long as the understanding or conscience approves of it. Intellectual considerations whether good or evil, whether dictated by reason or by passion, continually operate on the *prevailing motive* and sometimes modify it, sometimes supercede it altogether. This change is induced from reasons, arguments, or considerations being offered or suggested, by which the understanding or conscience decides to make the change, *for unless the understanding or conscience determines to make the change*, there can be neither change nor modification of the prevailing motive.

But it is wholly confounding our ideas concerning the nature of motives, to say that the arguments, reasons, or considerations, that induce the human mind to modify or change a previously prevailing motive, are also motives themselves. Thus for instance, let us suppose the case of a man influenced by an inordinate desire to obtain wealth. Let it now be suggested to him that riches do not constitute happiness, and that in their attainment life itself passes away without enjoyment, these and other similar considerations may either have no influence on his conduct, or they may have the effect to induce a modification of his then prevailing motive, or they may suggest to him another motive for regulating his future conduct in the procuring of happiness, for this is the end of all human action. But the inducements by which the change was effected were not themselves motives, but were merely arguments or prudential considerations that convinced his understanding that his then prevailing motive was neither judicious nor expedient, and he

perceiving this, as an intelligent creature resolved to take a different course, and regulate his future life by a more reasonable motive.

It must be evident therefore that the substitution of one motive for another depends altogether upon the intellect or conscience approving the change or substitution, and consequently, when the Necessitarians assert that one motive prevails over another motive because it is a stronger motive, it is an abuse of terms by employing the word *stronger* in an equivocal sense. A stronger motive is only stronger by being *intellectually so considered*. The advocates for human liberty therefore rationally contend that men are not impelled by any necessity to adopt one motive rather than another, but that they do so upon intelligent considerations, and hence men are justly entitled to a beneficial result, or are justly obnoxious to an evil consequence, whether as concerns their responsibilities in the sight of God or mankind.

ARTICLE No. II.

See Vol. I. page 57.

LORD BOLINGBROKE ON THE GOODNESS OF GOD.

“THOUGH I think that the moral attributes of the Supreme Being are absorbed, as I expressed myself before in his wisdom, that we should consider them only as different modifications of this physical attribute, whatever ideas we may frame on the phenomena, and that we must always talk precarious and impertinently, when we presume to apply our ideas of them to the appearances of things; *yet, I think it proper to show the divine and the atheist, that even the goodness of God is not hard to defend against them both*, by every one who denies, as every one may most reasonably, the question they beg and grant in consequence of their alliance to one another.

“The wisdom, is not so often discernable by us as the power of God, nor the goodness, as the wisdom. But a multitude of the phenomena being conformable to our ideas of goodness, we may reason about it as we did just now about the divine wisdom. If our adversaries show that men are exposed to many physical and moral evils, we can show much more good of both kinds that God has bestowed on us, or put it into our power to procure to ourselves. The evils we complain of, are constant or occasional effects of the constitution of a world that was not made for our sakes. But the means to soften some, to prevent others, and to palliate, and even to cure those that cannot be prevented, are so many instances of the positive goodness of God, which ought to be brought to account, and set against the evils with greater gratitude, and more fairly than they are by men who pass

them slightly over, while they descend into every particular of the sort, aggravate the least, and declaim pathetically and partially on all.

“It would be easy to confirm and illustrate what is advanced in the physical part, by numerous and unanswerable proofs which are to be found in the writings of natural philosophers. These men have done more service to true theism than all the metaphysical reasoners *a priori*; or to say something stronger and equally true, they have done it more service than divines and atheists in confederacy have done it hurt. It is impossible to read with attention, and without prejudice, what the former have writ, and not be convinced by fact, and by reason grounded on fact, not on hypothesis; *first*, that we ought to consider the world we inhabit no otherwise than as a little wheel in our solar system, nor our solar system any otherwise than as a little but larger wheel in the immense machine of the universe, and both the one and the other necessary perhaps to the motion of the whole, and to the pre-ordained revolutions in it; nor without being convinced, *secondly*, that the wisdom, or if you had rather say so, the goodness of God has provided amply for the well being of man in this world, and of the whole animal kind who are objects of the divine care, as well as he, according to their various destinations. In fine, and to take away every atheistical subterfuge, whether we say that the several species of animals were the final causes of these things, which seem particularly adapted to the use of each, or whether we say that the world was made such as it is without any regard to them; the proofs of divine wisdom and goodness will be equally strong; for, if the world was made for the universe only, and without any regard to its future inhabitants, this wisdom and goodness were exercised as much in fitting these inhabitants to live commodiously in a world already made, as they could have been in making a world on purpose for them.

“But we are not to think in this manner of the divine proceedings, nor to imagine that in them one plan succeeded another. Both were alike present to the mind of God. Our planet might have been, even uninhabited, very fit for all the mechanical purposes of it in the material system. But there may be other purposes which the creation of animals was necessary to answer, and since they were created, we ought to think that they were so for some purpose. It might be determined in the divine ideas, that there should be a gradation of life and intellect throughout the universe. In this case, it was necessary that there should be some creatures at our pitch of rationality, and others endued with all the degrees of life, sense, and intellect, which we observe in the several species, from the insect up to men. This world might be allotted to such kinds and orders of animated beings, and though it was made for the universe, not for them, and to their well-being in the constitution of it. They were not made to be miserable. But even man was not made to be happier than it was consistent with this part of the material system, and with his own rank in the intellectual that he should be.”—*Lord Bolingbroke, Fragment of Essays*, 43.

ARTICLE No. III.

See Vol. I. page 80.

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ON THE UNIVERSAL TERMINATION OF ALL  
SCHEMES OF PHILOSOPHY, (OR META-  
PHYSICS\*) IN SCEPTICISM.

THAT the end of all metaphysical investigation, unless on some few particulars respecting the mode in which the human mind itself works, is only perplexity and doubtfulness, is the ordinary estimate of all intelligent persons but the metaphysicians themselves. But though these results are absolutely demonstrated as it were to the understanding of every intellectual man in the fact, that every metaphysical school in the world has invariably terminated in utter scepticism as to what mankind ought to believe, yet very few persons appear to have made any practical inference from this remarkable circumstance, as to the absolute hopelessness of ever accomplishing any thing by such speculations. The delusion of men on this subject is so remarkable that it will be important to shew in what the radical fallacy of philosophy or metaphysics consists, for the subject has a most important bearing as to the mode by which the question concerning the credibility of the Scripture writings is to be discussed. The wonderful power of the human mind to infer unknown conditions of things from some few established principles or data, has ever induced intellectual men to attempt the solution of any subject that is involved in any difficulty of comprehension; and provided men could only obtain sufficient data from which to reason, it would be extremely difficult to assign any limitation to the discoveries they might make. But if men cannot obtain the necessary data, it is abundantly evident they can make no progress towards the discovery of unknown conditions of things. Now this is precisely the case with the philosophers; there are undoubtedly certain truths or principles discernable through an examination of the visible world, which have actual or absolute importance, but they are not sufficiently diversified as to their character to enable mankind to arrange them so that a certain inference is the necessary consequence. Our view of the subject can be rendered more clear however by an illustration. If two of the angles and one side of a triangle be given, we can easily find the other angle, the other two sides, and the area; but if we can only obtain one angle, and one side, the most accomplished mathematician can obtain no result. Such is the

\* As the term philosophy is used in a very vague manner by most persons of English descent, I have, to suit the ordinary views, used the term metaphysics synonymously in its widest sense, and more especially as bearing upon its subdivisions of ontology, cosmology, and pneumatology.

case with the metaphysicians: with all the research they have been able to make concerning God, providence, nature, &c. in their examination of the universe, during all preceding time, they have been unable to obtain any other data as it were, but one side and one angle to their triangle. In other words, the philosophers have ascertained nothing concerning the Creator of the universe beyond the fact of his infinite wisdom and power. This knowledge however is altogether insufficient from which to infer aught concerning his nature, attributes, or purposes, or to reconcile the phenomena of existing things with any speculation they have made on the subject. Few persons however have estimated the vast amount of intellectual labor that has been employed fruitlessly in attempting to expound the phenomena pertaining to the subjects of God, providence, nature, and man. Philosophers have succeeded each other for more than two thousand years in proposing solutions for the difficulties connected with these investigations; every conjecture that seems possible has been made, and yet nothing has been accomplished. However plausible these different solutions seemed to be in the first instance, a more extensive application of their principles has never yet failed to bring their advocates into a state of utter perplexity and scepticism.

Though the history of metaphysics is nothing else than a relation of the successive failures of philosophers to infer any thing concerning God, providence, nature, mankind, &c. I know of but one writer who has taken a correct view of the general subject, and deduced from it the utter impracticability of metaphysical science so called. Mr. G. H. Lewes, an English gentleman of the highest intellectual capacity, in some small volumes entitled "A Biographical History of Philosophy," has there scrutinized the whole progress of philosophy, and directed the attention of the reader to the circumstance, that every school of metaphysicians without exception, has invariably terminated in absolute scepticism, and hence in this remarkable circumstance it is abundantly clear that metaphysics as a science is impossible. As I acknowledge the greatest obligations to Mr. Lewes in this matter, I shall abstract the results of his exposition, which require no other verification than what is abundantly afforded in every general history of the different schools of philosophy or metaphysics.

Commencing with Thales, b. c. 600, Mr. Lewes shews the rise of metaphysical philosophy among the Greeks, and its progress under the several intellectual men who succeeded Thales down to the time of Socrates. b. c. 440. The result of all their investigations is then shewn to have been utter scepticism as to the truth of any inferences concerning God, nature, providence, &c. so far as the philosophers could deduce from the phenomena of the visible world. Philosophy thus baffled gave rise to the sophists, who in that instance were nothing else than sceptics as is sufficiently explained by Mr. Lewes. "The difference between the sophists and sceptics was this: They were both convinced of the insufficiency (uncertainty) of all knowledge, but the sceptics contented themselves with the conviction," (i. e. they stopped there,) "while the sophists gave up philosophy and turned their attention elsewhere. Satisfied with the vanity of all endeavor to penetrate

the mysteries of the universe, they began to consider their relations to other men. They devoted themselves to politics and rhetoric.”\*

In other words the sophists after having ascertained the vanity of metaphysics, merely claimed to be *wise men*, who could instruct others in that wisdom that belonged to the management of mere temporal matters. They however fell gradually into the highly improper practice of undertaking to teach their disciples how to conduct the affairs of life to mere personal advantage, irrespective of the principles of truth or justice; though certainly not as openly justifying immoralities. To sustain their position as instructors of men in every principle of practical wisdom, the sophists made great pretensions to superior sagacity and knowledge. It was in the vanity of such pretensions that Socrates encountered the sophists, and shewed how utterly deficient they were in the true principles of human wisdom, which has no secure foundation but in uprightness, justice, and strict adherence to truth. The honest integrity of Socrates, one of the most practically intellectual of men, convinced every one against the sophists, that the true wisdom of man was to do always what was right and honest, as measured by a moral as well as an intellectual perception of things in their varied relations to each other. Thus instead of *metaphysical speculations*, Socrates substituted *morality* as the basis of his intellectual teaching, which led only to practical results, and as such involving happiness both individually and socially.

The practical influence of Socrates endured but for a short time. Plato gradually, and Aristotle systematically, led men off again to metaphysics. Or, as stated by Mr. Lewes, “Aristotle brought philosophy round again to that condition from which Socrates had wrested it.”

Instead of following Mr. Lewes in his exposition of the views of the several schools of philosophers that gradually succeeded Aristotle, we shall simply take up his estimate of the result of the movement as it terminated

\* Though Mr. Lewes has fully justified the sophists from the misjudgment that men ordinarily entertain concerning them, he has omitted to state the metaphysical conclusions they had deduced. As this can be done in a few words, I subjoin the following view of the opinions of Protagoras, one of the most eminent of the sect.

He taught, that as far as truth or falsehood are concerned in our perceptions of external objects, that we could not distinguish between them. For that every way of considering a subject has its opposite, and that there is as much truth on the one side apparently as on the other, and consequently that nothing can be supported with certainty.

Concerning the gods, Protagoras said, “I am wholly unable to determine whether they have any existence or not; for the weakness of the human understanding, and the shortness of human life, with many other causes, prevent us from attaining this knowledge.”

In consequence of his several conclusions on these different subjects, Protagoras advanced his celebrated observation that “*man is the standard of all things*;” which is one of the wisest inferences ever made by philosophy. It means nothing more than that men are unable to estimate any thing beyond human capacity. Hence Protagoras and other sophists confined themselves to the study of those matters that concerned mankind in their practical relations to one another, as stated by Mr. Lewes.

just before the advent of Christ. "The sceptics, and all thinkers during the epoch we have just treated were such, whether they called themselves Epicureans, Stoics, Pyrrhonists, or New Academicians, the sceptics we say, were in possession of the most formidable arms. From Socrates, from Plato, and from Aristotle, they had borrowed their best weapons, and with these they had attacked philosophy, and attacked it with success.

"All the wisdom of the ancient world was powerless against the sceptics; speculative belief was reduced to the most uncertain 'probability.' Faith in truth was extinct. Faith in human endeavor was gone. Philosophy was impossible.

"But there was one peculiarity of the Socratic doctrine which was preserved even in the midst of scepticism. Socrates had made Ethics the great object of his inquiries, and all subsequent thinkers had given it a degree of attention which before was unknown. The consequence was that the *common sense* doctrine of the Stoics, and the *probabilities* of the sceptics, however futile as scientific principles, were efficacious enough as moral principles. Common sense may be a bad basis for metaphysical or scientific reasoning, but it is not so bad a basis for a system of morals."

But as to any progress of metaphysical science, Mr. Lewes remarks, "Centuries of thought had not advanced the mind one step nearer to a solution of the problems with which, child-like, it began. Not only did it doubt the solutions of the great problems which others had attempted; it doubted the possibility of any solution. *It was not the doubt that begins, but the doubt which ends inquiry.* It had no illusions.

"This was the second crisis of Greek Philosophy," (that of the sophists being the first.) "Reason thus assailed, could only find a refuge in faith; and the next period opens with the attempt to construct a religious philosophy."

Previous to entering upon the exposition of the method adopted by the philosophers of the Alexandrian School, Mr. Lewes makes the following admirable preface. "Philosophy," (i. e. the science which deduces the existence, attributes, and providence of God, the phenomena of man, nature, &c. from inferences derived from the natural world,) "no longer found a home in Greece," (i. e. heathen Greece,) "it had no longer any worshippers in its native country. A period had arrived when all problems had been stated, and none seemed likely to be solved. Every system which human ingenuity could devise, had been devised by the early thinkers, and not one had been able to stand examination. In the early annals of speculation, a new and decisive advance is made whenever a new question is asked. To suggest a doubt is to exercise ingenuity; to ask a question is to awaken men to a new view of the subject. But now, all questions had been asked; old questions had been revived under new forms; nothing remained to stimulate inquiry or to give speculators a hope of success."

Passing over the interesting account of Mr. Lewes as to the manner in which the Alexandrian School blended the principles of the Greek philosophy with the *dogmata* derived from the Scripture, we merely extract his philosophical remarks on the absurd incongruity of such a scheme. "Phi-

losophy, conceive it as you will, is entirely the offspring of reason; it is the endeavor to explain by reason the mysteries amidst which we live, move and have our being." Although it is legitimate to say, "reason is incapable of solving the problems proposed to it," it is not legitimate to add "therefore we must call in the aid of faith." (*i. e.* revelation.) In philosophy, reason must either reign alone or abdicate. No compromise is permissible. If there are things between heaven and earth which are not dreamt of in our philosophy—which do not come within the possible" (attainable) "sphere of our philosophy—we may believe in them indeed, but we cannot christen that belief Philosophical.

"One of two things—either reason is capable of solving the problems, or it is incapable. In the one case its attempt is philosophy; in the second case its attempt is futile. Any attempt to mix up faith (revelation) with reason in a matter exclusively addressed to reason, must be abortive. We do not say that what faith implicitly accepts, reason may not explicitly justify; but we say that to bring faith (revelation) to the aid of reason, is altogether to destroy the *philosophical* character of any inquiry. Reason may justify faith; but faith must not furnish conclusions for philosophy. Directly reason is abandoned, philosophy ceases, and every explanation then offered is a *theological explanation*; and must be put to altogether different tests from what a philosophical explanation would require."

After the clear exposition given by Mr. Lewes concerning the absurdity of advancing philosophical speculations on the basis of revelation, it is evident that philosophy had now terminated her legitimate course in utter doubtfulness as to any established principles of truth. Yet as philosophy in ordinary estimation, continued for some time afterwards through the influence of the Alexandrian School, I think it not amiss to place this matter in that distinct point of view in which it is exhibited by Mr. Lewes. "Under the name of the Alexandrian School, are designated, loosely enough, all those thinkers who endeavored to find a refuge from scepticism in a new philosophy based on altogether new principles. Now, though these various thinkers by no means constitute a school, they constitute a movement, &c."

This movement was essentially divided into two plans of operation. *First*, the Neo-Platonic,—which consisted of heathens who incorporated *dogmata* derived from the Scripture, with the speculations and dialectics of Plato; and *secondly*, the "Alexandrian School," who were christians that undertook to extend and explain the revelations contained in the Scripture by the speculations and notions of Plato and other philosophers; selecting among them all whatever they considered to be harmonious with the doctrine of Scripture.

Neo-Platonism terminated about the middle of the fifth century in the absolute want of heathen disciples. The christian school of Alexandria, after having exerted the most baneful influence upon the simple expositions of Christianity, terminated in Scholasticism; "that extraordinary amount of perverse subtleties, wire-drawn distinctions, and quibbling logic" that confounded the human understanding until the outbreak of the Reformation

under Luther which swept it away every where except in the unreformed Catholic kingdoms of Spain, Portugal, Italy, &c.

Philosophy, which had really been extinct since the times immediately preceding the rise of the Alexandrian movement just before the christian era, was again attempted to be resuscitated by Des Cartes about the beginning of the sixteenth century. Once more the metaphysicians attempted to solve the great problems of God, nature, providence, human existence, &c. by means of deductions from the sensible world, or phenomena cognoscible by intellectual inferences. But what was the result? The system of Des Cartes terminated in the clear logical deductions of Spinoza as establishing Pantheism; a conclusion from which, according to Lewes, there is no escape, "but by denying the possibility of metaphysical science."

Bishop Berkeley attempted the modification of Spinoza's doctrines, and "the chief result of all his labor was," says Lewes, "the lesson he taught of the vanity of ontological speculations. He paved the way to scepticism, the gulf which yawns at the end of all consistent metaphysics."

It is unnecessary to carry this exposition of the failure of metaphysical speculation any farther. The principles established by Berkeley when carried out in all their consistency by Hume, once more reduced the human mind to a state of utter scepticism as to the truth or reality of any thing upon which the intellect could be employed, that was not based upon the mere fact of consciousness and experience. Reid and other philosophers of the common sense school, as they termed themselves, never discerned the true force of the sceptical objections, and therefore failed entirely to answer them. Their only value as metaphysicians has been the directing the attention of mankind to psychology.

I trust the preceding exhibition of the history of philosophy is abundantly sufficient to convince the reader, that the metaphysicians have never yet been able to solve a single problem concerning the great phenomena of God, providence, nature, or man, and in the application of this remarkable fact, I urge it to the reader in further demonstration of the correctness of the position I have sustained against the presumption of the deists, in undertaking to object aught against the Scripture writings, as being inconsistent with what God ought to have done.

## ARTICLE No. IV.

See Vol. I. page 252.

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## ON THE APOCRYPHAL BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

OUR Saviour's teaching and that of his apostles for some time after the promulgation of Christianity, was altogether oral. It was fully thirty years after the crucifixion before the gospels were published, and many years must have elapsed afterwards before the christian world were furnished with transcripts of them. But previous to the publication of the gospels of the New Testament canon, many other persons had recorded what they had seen Christ do, or what they had heard him preach, and sometimes they probably included in these relations, mere rumors of particulars that were in circulation among the people on such subjects, and as such under all the inaccuracies and exaggerations to which such relations are liable. As the attendance on our Saviour's ministry, except by the apostles, could only have been occasional on the part of his other disciples, it is evident that any attempt on the part of such hearers to give a statement of his preaching or actions must necessarily be defective, and in particulars often incorrect. Yet such was the great interest felt among the primitive christians to be acquainted with these matters, that it is evident certain individuals had written out statements that were eagerly received by the followers of Christ. That these histories were inaccurate, not to say untrue in particulars, is sufficiently intimated by Luke in the preface to his gospel as being his motive for giving a correct statement. The other gospels of our canon were written on similar considerations, and in some instances, if we can rely upon ecclesiastical tradition, upon the express application of christian believers.

But both before and after the several gospels of our canon were published, the great work of preaching the gospel was most earnestly prosecuted by the several apostles in the various regions of the empire to which their missionary action was directed. Wherever an apostle or other eminent disciple of our Lord thus preached the gospel, the subject matter of his discourses and expositions of doctrine were received, and if committed to writing were inscribed, as being the doctrine or gospel of Peter, Thomas, Andrew, &c. without the least intention of representing them as having been actually written by such individuals. If we advert to the circumstances under which such books were necessarily written it is very easy to comprehend that they were liable to inaccuracies, misconceptions, and contradictions.

But whatever may have been the errors and mistakes of such writings, their authors were honest men who meant well, and in the exposure of their inaccuracies or contradictions by the publication of the gospels of our canon as undoubted writings of apostles and evangelists, all preceding books were neglected and fell into at least a temporary insignificance.

But unfortunately for Christianity, the first proselytes brought into their profession a variety of notions and speculations that they had either imbibed previously or advocated on their conversion, and which in their attempts to reconcile with the theory of Christianity, introduced a great variety of opinions that gave rise to schisms, factions, heresies, &c. The less the amount of philosophy, the closer any body of christians adhered to the undoubted writings of the apostles, and hence the more simple-minded people essentially cohered together in their adherence to the simplicity of scriptural truth, while the more speculative and learned were divided from them and from one another by presumptuous theories, that gradually gave rise to that class of men which are designated in ecclesiastical histories as the several heretics of the second, third and fourth centuries.

As it was often very difficult and sometimes impossible to reconcile some of the principles of these heretical schemes, with those writings which now constitute our present canon of the New Testament, it was a matter of great importance to the advocates of these earlier schisms and heresies to avail themselves, when they could, of any gospel or doctrinal work ascribed to the apostles Andrew, Thomas, Peter, &c. composed as we have described in a preceding paragraph, which in its inaccuracy or misapprehension appeared to sustain some of their peculiar notions or observances. In this manner these imperfect documents received a peculiar importance in the view of such persons, and whenever a controversy arose between them and the more orthodox party, we can easily understand the question as to the authority of these different books, purporting to have been written by apostles, &c. was determined by the prejudices of the individual rather than by any external or internal evidence on the subject. When once their opinion was settled as to the value or correctness of any book unrecognized by the general mass of christians, they felt no difficulty in charging our present received New Testament Scriptures with having been corrupted in all those places which militated against their doctrines. If they could by correcting and altering the text of the New Testament make them conformable to their sectarian views they did not hesitate to do so, and if they found it impossible to amend the text without changing the whole scope of the discourse or argument, they then wholly rejected such books as being either forgeries, or such gross corruptions of the apostolic writings as made it impossible to amend them.

In process of time the disputes among these several sects or heresies of Christianity and the more rational body of believers, became matters of such interest and importance that some of those unprincipled wretches, who are to be found in every age and country, began to make a gainful traffic by reproducing with interpolations and corruptions, those earlier imperfect or erroneous writings of which we have previously spoken, or of forging others with the express purpose of selling them to christians holding peculiar notions or doctrines.\* Hence it was not the heretics that were the forgers or

\* There has been in all times a greater or less number of unprincipled men who have made a profit by forging books, where either the name of the author, or the nature of the subject possessed value in the estimation of men. No fact is better known in the history of literature than this, whether in ancient or modern times.

corrupters of these apocryphal books, but those unprincipled atheists who imposed them on their prejudiced credulity.\*

The idea of fraud or imposture on the part of the earlier heretics in the composition of such writings is most unreasonable, for essentially these apocryphal books are of a harsh and ascetical tendency inculcating self-denial, poverty, &c. which it would be absurd to suppose any mere schismatic would undertake to forge. It is however easy to comprehend that such persons might be very readily deluded, by a writing expressly corrupted or forged by some unprincipled atheist, for the purpose of being sold to them, in the circumstance that it justified or sustained more or less of their prominent doctrines or practices.

Though these forgers naturally kept out of sight in these cases, yet we have some facts stated in early ecclesiastical history, which sufficiently justifies the view we have taken concerning the apocryphal books of the New Testament. The testimony of the earlier writers are very distinct concerning the forgeries or corruptions of books of an early age, by an individual of the name of Leucius Charinus, who lived about the middle of the second century. Lardner, in his History of Heretics, (*Works*, viii. 514, &c.) has enumerated ten different apocryphal books that are referred to the frauds of this unprincipled character. There is an absurd supposition sometimes made concerning him that he was a Marcionite. I apprehend he was a downright knave and atheist, who as he wrote his books towards sustaining the doctrines of the Marcionites, so he doubtless found his principal purchasers in that body as he had contemplated, and they were thus deluded by fraudulent books of whose true character they were wholly unsuspicuous.†

\* Gross and absurd as the several schemes of the early heretics may seem to us, yet we must remember they are thus represented to us by their enemies, who in some cases misunderstood, and in others exaggerated conclusions deducible from their systems which the holders of them did not admit. This is done at this time among ourselves in our sectarian controversies, and if the adversary statements should only survive the lapse of years, the christians of a future age might find it difficult to comprehend how such absurd opinions as are thus represented could have been held at the present time.

† The ignorance or simplicity of the christian world has continually been imposed upon in all ages by unprincipled men in such particulars. Lucian, in his Life of Perigrinus, (about A. D. 140,) informs us that this knave and impostor having pretended to become a christian, acquired considerable influence among them, (*i. e.* in some sect or heresy,) and that he “explained and interpreted several of their books, and *wrote some himself.*”

Tertullian mentions (*De Bapt. chap. 17*) that a certain presbyter of Asia had been detected and degraded for having forged a book entitled “The Travels of Paul and Thecla.” This unprincipled wretch pretended he had written the book out of love to the apostle Paul. No christian could have done so. He was undoubtedly an atheist, who had thus attempted to obtain money by imposing his fraud upon the credulous prejudices of some one or other of the christian schismatics or heretics of that day.

In a later age this same unprincipled class of men employed themselves in writing and selling martyrologies to honest but deluded christians, which were often so absurd and mendacious as to be injurious to the christian faith. Hence

But whatever influence the apocryphal books of the New Testament may have had among the sectaries and schismatics that distracted the christian church during the first two or three centuries, and however much the more ignorant class of those called orthodox may have been puzzled or misled on particulars by such writings, yet there never was a time when the enlightened portion of christians acknowledged any of these apocryphal books to be of any authority. It is singular that any belief should still exist among men to the contrary of this exposition, since it is above one hundred years ago that it was distinctly shewn by the Rev. Jeremiah Jones, in his work on the canon of Scripture, that though some of the early fathers and ecclesiastical historians have occasionally cited such books, yet they have never referred to them but as apocryphal writings.

That the more enlightened body of christians were perplexed by such books and made a partial use of them, even reading some of them in their congregational assemblies is also evident, but this was done not from any belief as to their authority, but simply as being books of edification, in like manner as a man might read a sermon of Tillotson or South to a modern congregation.

Yet in consequence of the multitude of such books, and the ill consequences that sometimes resulted from them, the more enlightened members of the christian body gradually perceived the necessity of determining with precision, what books should be read in churches as the only writings to be regarded of religious authority. The principle they assumed as the basis of such determination, was, to reject every book of which they had not satisfactory evidence that it had been written by an apostle, or by persons such as Mark and Luke who were immediate associates of the apostles. The determination of this class of books was in the main a very easy matter as we have observed in a former page. That there were some doubts concerning a few books of the New Testament canon, which have remained to the present time, only shews the impartial temper of those persons by whom the canon was determined.

the Council of Trullo, A. D. 692, in their sixty-third canon decree, "whereas certain false stories of martyrdom have been circulated by the enemies of truth, calculated to bring the martyrs into discredit, and drive the hearers of such things into infidelity, we decree that they be not read in the churches but committed to the flames." (*Maitland, Church in Catacombs*, 156.) As I have no opportunity to examine these canons, I am unaware whether the fathers at Trullo enumerate any works in particular.

## ARTICLE No. V.

See Vol. I. page 254.

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### ON THE DOUBTFUL BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON.

THE doubts that have been expressed concerning the authenticity of *2 Peter*, *2 and 3 John*, and the *Apocalypse*, I consider to be unreasonable. These Epistles are inscribed with the names of their authors, there are no views given in them different from other Scripture writings, and their style agrees with the writings ascribed to these several authors. As there is nothing whatever to justify a suspicion of their being forgeries, the amount of testimony in their favor is amply sufficient to sustain their authenticity against the mere possibility of their having been written by unknown persons who bore the names of Peter, or John, which is the only ground upon which any objection can be made against them.

The authenticity, or rather the authority of the Epistles of James, and Jude, is a subject of greater perplexity. Allowing them to have been written by the half brothers of our Lord, which I consider to be the most probable opinion, there is no authority to give them the character of apostolical writings. I think they are good exponents of certain conditions of Christianity as it was thirty or forty years after Christ, allowing for some tampering with the last chapter of James which has manifestly been corrupted in the fourteenth verse respecting the anointing with oil, see Vol. II. 224, (note.) There is also a false statement made in the seventeenth and eighteenth verses which in representing the power of devout prayer, says that Elijah prayed to God that it might not rain, &c. and that he again prayed and it did rain. There is nothing to justify any such statement. Elijah merely predicted the drought, as he certainly did the rain, by the command of Jehovah, see *1 Kings xvii. 1. &c. xviii. 1. &c.* and it is impossible to put any other construction on the relation there made.

The most perplexing subject involved in estimating the present Canon of the New Testament, is the true character of the Epistle to the Hebrews, which differs from all the other doubtful books in the fact, that it is not inscribed with the name of any writer. Neither do we know to what people or community it was written. That it was not a general or Catholic Epistle, is as clear as it is possible to be.

After much reading on the subject, and in opposition to my previous belief for more than thirty years, I cannot come to any other conclusion than that it was not written by the apostle Paul.

In the first place the avowed ignorance, the doubts, or the ascription of it to different writers, on the part of such persons as Origen, Tertullian,

Eusebius, Caius, the Church of Rome, &c. constitute an amount of objection concerning the authorship of this Epistle that cannot be removed. The belief of other persons, such as Clement of Alexandria, &c. that it was written by Paul appears to have been merely *opinion*, for if they had any evidence to justify such an inference, how could Origen who was the disciple of Clement, Tertullian, and the Church of Rome for near four hundred years, reject it as the writing of Paul.

There are two unjustifiable quotations from the Old Testament in this Epistle that would be sufficient to disprove the assumption that it was written by an apostle, could we be certain that they have not been added to the text since the time the Epistle was written. These quotations are from Psalm cii. 25—27, (*Heb.* i. 10—12,) and from Psalm viii. 4—6, (*Heb.* ii. 6—8,) and as such applied to the Messiah, to whom however nothing can be clearer than their inapplication. Considering the learning and intellectual acuteness of the author of this Epistle, it is not easy to believe he could have so mistaken these quotations. I therefore believe they are additions which have crept into the text from some one having annexed them in the first instance to the margin of an ancient *manuscript*.

Furthermore, notwithstanding the great acquaintance of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews concerning the principles and institutions of the Mosaic Law, there is a very remarkable inaccuracy in one of his statements. In chapter ix. 1—4, he says that the altar of incense was in the Holy of Holies, and that the rod of Aaron and pot of manna were deposited within the ark. Both of these statements are incorrect as may be seen by *Exod.* xl. 21, 26; *1 Kings* viii. 9. How the writer of this Epistle could have fallen into this misstatement can only be explained by the supposition that he quoted from memory. Jahn, and others, have supposed that it was written correctly by the author in the Hebrew language, and that the error was made by the person who translated it into Greek. This however, is not only a most arbitrary assumption, but the most unjustifiable that any critic could advance.

The Epistle to the Hebrews must have been written very early, for I think it clear that Clement of Rome, whose death cannot be placed later than A. D. 95, quotes it in his first letter to Corinthians so manifestly, that I wonder how some persons should have doubted on the subject. The reader may see the parallel places extracted by *Lardner, Credibil.* ii. 46 to 50. The internal evidence of *Heb.* viii. 4, would be that it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, (A. D. 70.)

The best judgment we can make on the general subject of this Epistle is set forth in the opinion of Origen, who observed, (*Lardner, &c.* ii. 495,) “The sentiments of the Epistle are admirable, and not inferior to the acknowledged writings of the apostle, (*Paul.*) If I was to speak my opinion I should say that the sentiments are the apostle’s, but the language and composition is of some one who committed to writing the apostle’s sense, and as it were reduced into commentaries the things spoken by his master. If therefore, any church receives this Epistle as Paul’s, it is to be commended even upon that account; for it is not without reason that the an-

cients, (*i. e.* some of them,) have handed it down as Paul's;" (*i. e.* as to its doctrines,) "but who wrote the *Epistle God only knows.*"

As it is undoubted this book has been written by a most intellectual and devout person, certainly within sixty or seventy years after Christ's crucifixion, it cannot be regarded otherwise than as the work of an individual fully instructed on the subject either by the apostles themselves, or by their more favored associates. Regarding it therefore in this light I shall not hesitate to quote it as a correct exponent of apostolic teaching, and of the same authority in the Canon of the New Testament, as the book of Job, Ecclesiastes, Proverbs, &c. in the Old Testament.

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## ARTICLE No. VI.

See Vol. I. page 347.

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### ON THE HUMAN SOUL AND THE VARIOUS QUESTIONS IMPLICATED IN ITS EXISTENCE, IMMORTALITY, &c.

FAMILIAR as we are with the phenomena of life and death, we know nothing of them but as being different states or conditions. In what particular the difference consists we are wholly ignorant, and all the efforts of philosophers or theologians during preceding times, have been unavailing towards solving the difficulties that attend the comprehension of this interesting subject.

It would be useless to enumerate the opinions of the ancient philosophers respecting the phenomenon of life. The majority could come to no conclusion satisfactory to themselves, and those who did persuade themselves that it was more probable that the soul of man survived the dissolution of the body, could only sustain their opinion by paralogisms deduced from other objects or principles which are so evidently fallacious, that modern philosophy does not hesitate to reject them entirely, and acknowledge that we can attain to no reasonable conclusion whatever on the subject.\*

\* "As to the great question what becomes of man after death," Macaulay (*Miscel.* iii. 322) says, "we do not see that a highly educated European left to his unassisted reason, is more likely to be in the right than a Blackfoot Indian. Not a single one of the many sciences in which we surpass the Blackfoot Indians, throws the smallest light on the state of the soul after animal life is extinct. In truth all the philosophers, ancient and modern, who have attempted without the help of revelation to prove the immortality of man, from Plato down to Franklin, appear to us to have failed deplorably."

As respects the psychology of the subject, the Scriptures whether of the Old or New Testament do not give us the least information. The Old Testament indeed, does not even formally recognize a future state, until the times of the later prophets, and then not as founded on any positive revelation from Jehovah. The New Testament in teaching a future state of reward or punishment, in that circumstance only establishes the fact that the personality of mankind is not annihilated by death, but beyond this assurance to our faith it communicates no other information, as we shall presently shew in opposition to the unwarrantable inferences that theology has undertaken to deduce from the New Testament writings.

Yet notwithstanding the utter want of proof as deducible from the natural conditions of human nature, and unsustained by any express revelation from Jehovah, as far as we are acquainted with the subject, there seems to have been always from the remotest time, in every age and clime, an almost universal belief among mankind that death did not terminate their existence, and that there was an invisible state consequent to the present life in which the good should be rewarded and the wicked punished.

As there is no argument deducible from the natural world to justify such an opinion, and as there is no intimation whatever given us in the Scripture prior to the advent of Jesus Christ, that a revelation was made on the subject by Jehovah, it is a very interesting enquiry to ascertain how this belief concerning the separate existence and immortality of the human soul could have arisen among mankind. The investigation of this subject is specially important to us as christians, for it is an indisputable fact that our prevailing notions concerning the human soul are not derived from any information communicated in the Scriptures, but are essentially those ancient opinions that prevailed from the remotest periods of time, concerning which we have no information as to how they may have originated.

I cannot comprehend how the doctrine of a future state and consequent immortality of the human soul could have arisen among mankind but in the circumstance, that as Jehovah had from the beginning promised to reward the righteous and punish the wicked, so on the strength of a promise made by the omnipotent Creator of all things, as soon as men saw that such judgments did not take place in the present life, unless in a partial manner, so they inferred there must be another state of being after death in which men should be rewarded or punished. The bodily translation of Enoch, to all who knew it, must have confirmed this inference with the force of a demonstration. But as that circumstance may have been known to but a few persons, the continued exhibition of the fact, that the wicked often passed through life unpunished, while the righteous went unrewarded, was, I apprehend, sufficiently conclusive with all who believed in the promises of Jehovah, to infer that there must be a future state, and consequent immortality of human nature.\*

\* That the belief of the ancient Jewish patriarchs in a future state was not founded on any formal revelation to them on that particular, is clearly the reasoning of the writer of the Epistolé to the Hebrews, who in arguing on the subject does not quote any text as announcing such doctrine, but simply puts it on the ground

But though such an inference is strictly correct, and so forcible as to carry a conviction to the mind almost equal to an absolute demonstration, yet it was only conclusive as to a general truth of whose details there was not the smallest information given, nor the least instruction as to how the expectation of men would be realized.

Mankind however have never yet rested on the conviction of a general truth or principle. Sooner or later some speculator arises who attempts to explain the subject by inferential reasonings, which in their apparent plausibility induce an assent that gradually becomes tantamount to conviction. If the opinion be then made an essential particular for the construction of other speculations and inferences, it gradually acquires such stability that men will rely upon it with as much confidence as if it had been established by the most irrefragable conclusions.

Though we have no information as to how men in the first instance refined upon the general principle that there was a future state, in order to frame an opinion concerning the condition of man after death, yet I think it may be inferred from an attention to the phenomena of things which seem to imply but one course of proceeding.

Men every where saw that when death occurred, the body gradually decomposed into a mere mass of earthly matter, that became mixed with the soil and from which it was apparently incapable of being separated. If then there was a future state involving personal consciousness in individuals after death, it was assumed that the principle of vitality, consciousness, and rationality, was something distinct from the body, and that the phenomenon of death virtually consisted in the separation of a soul or spirit from a mere animal body. Hence as the body resolved ultimately into mere earth, apparently incapable of re-organization, so it seemed to follow that the future reward or punishment of mankind must belong to a soul or spirit that was separated from the body at the moment of death.

The next inquiry was concerning the modes in which the reward or punishment took place, and having no data whatever upon which an inference might be based, it became a mere matter of uncertain speculation, which men attempted to solve by putting themselves in the place of their Creator, and inferring what they considered would be conformable to his purposes in having created mankind. On this subject they differed widely. The more ancient and renowned nations of the earth supposed that immediately after death the human soul was judged for its past life, and was then sentenced to be born again into the world, either in a better or worse condition than before, and that the soul thus transmigrating through successive bodies, would in process of time be either finally received into a state of exalted

of being a necessary inference from the circumstance, that God "*who it is impossible can lie*," (*Heb. vi. 13—18,*) had made certain promises to them which had not been fulfilled in the present life. Hence the distinct conclusion made, (*Heb. xi. 13, 16,*) that as they had not received the promises that God had made them, so they were persuaded there must be another country, *i. e.* a future life; and therefore they confessed they were merely strangers and pilgrims on the earth, who looked forward to a future existence in another world.

blessedness, or be subject to torment and misery in a place appointed for the reception of the irreclaimably wicked.\* This doctrine of the transmigration of souls has been not only one of the most ancient notions in the world, but it has ever been the most prevailing belief. At this very time it probably comprehends thrice as many adherents as any other opinion concerning the condition of the soul after death.

Where men did not embrace the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, they considered that the human spirit immediately after death was rewarded or punished by a suitable condition in an *Elysium* or *Tartarus*, constructed on their notions of propriety as to such abodes, and where a state whether of happiness or misery was their allotted condition for eternity.

The Jews seem to have been very uncertain and confused in their estimate of the subject. A portion of them appear to have recognized a shadowy dreamy kind of existence in a place appointed as they supposed for departed spirits, which they denominated *sheol*, (*Job* x. 21, 22,†) but they seem to have formed no definite notions on the subject until a period perhaps not long preceding our Saviour's advent, when they enlarged their notion of *sheol* by analogies derived from the opinions of the Greeks concerning *Hades*. Many of the rabbis however, have always recognized, except in the case of the perfectly righteous, a transmigration of the soul through the bodies of plants, beasts, &c.—See *Stehellin, Trad. of Jews*, i. 277, and *Allen's Modern Judaism*, 130, 205.

In the promulgation of Christianity, the doctrine of a resurrection of the dead was distinctly announced to mankind by our Saviour and his apostles, but nothing was formally stated on the subject of the soul, its nature, or mode of existence. But as the doctrine was most clearly announced that mankind did not perish by the death of the body, so the primitive christian speculators on the subject of the human soul, held on to the original doctrines inferred by men of former ages on that subject, or but partially modified their opinion by certain inferences deduced from some incidental passages of the New Testament writings.

If we however closely scrutinize what is said in the New Testament, we shall find nothing to justify any dogmatical opinion on the subject. The New Testament announces distinctly that there shall be a future resurrection of the dead, a judgment upon them, a reward or punishment, and nothing more. Consequently, the prevailing opinions in the christian world at the present time respecting the conditions of the soul between death and judgment, are not so much justifiable inferences deduced from the New Testament, as they are modifications of the deductions of the ancient Jews or heathens, who in the remotest times had come to such conclusions.

\* There is an elaborate and curious view of this subject given by Plato in his *Republic*, *lib. x. chap. 13*, &c. as exhibited in the vision or trance of Erus the Pamphylian.

† “Let me alone,” says Job, “that I may take comfort a little before I go whence I shall not return, *even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death*; a land of darkness, as darkness itself and of the shadow of death: without any order, and where the light is as darkness.”

As a correct view of this subject from a proper investigation of the Scripture writings is not only important as communicating truth, but still more important as confuting error and unjustifiable doctrines that have grown out of wrong notions on the subject, we will thoroughly examine what the Scriptures have really communicated to our faith, as well as shew the incorrectness of certain prevailing theological assumptions as deduced from particular passages of the New Testament.

The Scriptures inform us that Jehovah who has made mankind rational and moral free agents, holds them as such responsible for all their actions, and that though we be all subject to the phenomena of death, yet there shall be at some future time a resurrection from the dead, when every one shall be judged according to his deeds. After this judgment, the righteous shall be made the inheritors of an eternal kingdom, while the wicked shall be subjected to a fearful condemnation.

So far as this communication is addressed to mankind as moral agents responsible for their good or evil conduct, nothing can be more explicit than the statement thus made, and this would appear to be all that Jehovah considered necessary to be made known to mankind, for this being sufficient for his purposes as inducing moral action on our part, it would seem that he deemed it wholly unnecessary we should understand the psychology or physiology of our spiritual organization. But the christian world have not been satisfied with the bare knowledge of the fact thus revealed to our faith, or of the doctrine connected with it. They have been for ages employed in speculating on the subject, and having from the very origin of Christianity incorporated with their religious speculations the notions they had previously derived from heathen philosophy or rabbinical inferences, these assumptions have been handed down through successive generations of men to the present time, protected by various inferences derived from incidental passages of the Scripture writings.

There is no portion of the Scripture whatever that instructs us in what the principle of human vitality or rationality consists. The fact is always implied, the psychology is never stated, and hence christians are divided in their speculations on the subject. Some suppose there is an immaterial spirit united in an incomprehensible manner to our bodily frame, in which life, rationality and consciousness inheres. This spirit they suppose is separable from the body, and exists from the moment of death in a state of active consciousness, whilst the body decomposes into the simple elements of matter. Others suppose the spirit to be matter or substance so highly etheralized, as not to be discerned by any of our mortal senses. Others again consider life and rationality to be mere phenomena resulting only from our material organization, and that there is no soul or spirit as contrasted with our bodies, and consequently when death takes place that the entire man becomes extinct and ceases to be, *quoad hoc*, until God may see fit to reorganize the body.

The simple light in which this question concerning the nature of the soul ought to be regarded is plainly this. Let the organization of human nature be what it may, it is alone from Jehovah, who in determining to make such

a creature as man has constituted him suitable for his peculiar purposes, no matter what the principle or contrivance may be by which he is thus made suitable. Therefore, whether Jehovah has made man an intellectual moral free agent, through a mere material organization, or whether this is effected by the infusion of a material or immaterial spirit, the phenomena of human existence will be in either case consistent with all those particulars of intellectual or moral action which the Creator requires of mankind, whether for time or for eternity. The moral end of human nature being thus secured for the accomplishment of moral action under the teaching of the Scriptures, I apprehend the mere question as to what may be the nature of our souls is a subject perfectly indifferent to our religious faith, however relatively important any one opinion may be to the consistency of theological systems of human construction. No one therefore need concern himself as to the reputed orthodoxy of any one opinion rather than that of another.\* But as truth is always desirable, and more especially so when it confutes doctrines and practices derived from false inferences of what has been communicated to us from our Creator, let us deliberately investigate the subject that we may have a full comprehension of its merits in every point of view.

I have already called the reader's attention, Vol. I. 365, 405, &c. to the fact that there is no intimation of a future state given in the history of the patriarchs, or afterwards by Moses in the promulgation of the Jewish Dispensation. All the sanctions of Jehovah to the institutions of either the Patriarchs or the Jews, were entirely temporal, as must be familiar to any one who has read the Pentateuch with the least attention.

Neither is there any passage in either the Old or New Testament that gives us any information concerning the organization of our nature, or in what

\* "All the great ends of religion and morality are secured barely by the immortality of the soul; (*Locke, Letter to Bishop of Worcester,*) without *a necessary supposition that the soul is immaterial*; and I crave leave to add, that immortality may and shall be annexed to that which in its own nature is neither immaterial nor immortal, as the apostle expressly declares in these words, (*1 Cor. xv. 53,*) 'For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.'—See also *Locke, Hum. Underst. lib. iv. chap. 3.*

" When I went to the University, says Bishop Watson, (*Memoirs*, i. 23, 24,) I was of opinion as most school boys are, that the soul was a substance distinct from the body, and that when a man died he in classical phrase breathed out his soul, *animam expiravit*, that it then went I knew not whither, &c. This notion of the soul was without doubt the offspring of prejudice and ignorance, and I must own that my knowledge of the nature of the soul is much the same now that it was then. I have read volumes on the subject, but I have no scruple in saying that *I know nothing about it.*

" Believing as I do in the truth of the christian religion which teaches that men are accountable for their actions, I trouble not myself with dark disquisitions concerning necessity and liberty, matter and spirit; hoping as I do for eternal life through Jesus Christ, I am not disturbed at my inability to clearly convince myself that the soul is, or is not, a substance distinct from the body. The truth of the christian religion depends upon testimony, now man is competent to judge of the weight of testimony, though he is not able I think fully to investigate the nature of the soul."

principle our life, rationality, or personality consists. The fact is always assumed, but on the psychology of the subject we have not the smallest information in the Scripture. So far indeed are the Scriptures from communicating any information upon the subject, that there is no word in the Hebrew language that signifies either soul or spirit, in the technical sense in which we use these terms, as implying something distinct from the body. That the Scripture words may be paraphrased to express such an idea is evident from what the English translators of our Bibles have done in various places. But such renderings are no proof whatever that the Hebrew words possess any force in a technical sense.

There are three words in the Hebrew Scripture that are rendered by our translators *soul* or *spirit*: the first is *nephesh*, the second *neshamah*, the third *ruach*.

As these two latter words are of comparative unimportance I will first dispose of them.

*neshamah*, occurs twenty-four times in the Old Testament; it is rendered generally as *breath*, breath of life, blast of God, inspiration of the Almighty. Once, (*Is. lvii. 16*), *souls*, and twice as *spirit*.—*Job xxvi. 4*; *Prov. xx. 27*.

*ruach*, occurs three hundred and fifty-six times in the Old Testament. It primarily signifies *breathing* or *wind*. It is rendered in our translation to signify either the Spirit of God, wind or breeze, breath, life, mind, spirit of man, east wind, west wind, blast, anger, evil spirit, vain words, (*i. e.* windy words,) tempest, holy spirit, free spirit, broken spirit, hasty of spirit, haughty spirit, wounded spirit, spirit of deep sleep.

No one therefore can contend that either of these two words can be considered as implying technically the soul or spirit of man as an immaterial principle, independent of his mere animal organization.

The word *nephesh*, is the term that is especially supposed to imply what we mean by *soul* or *spirit*.

According to lexicographers, (see Parkhurst, Gesenius, &c.) the word *nephesh* primarily signifies to *breathe*. Hence a living creature, *i. e.* that lives by *breathing*. Parkhurst says under *sixth section*, “*nephesh*, hath been supposed to signify the *spiritual part* of man or what we commonly call his *soul*. I must for myself confess that I can find no passage where it hath *undoubtedly* this meaning.”

But though this observation is perfectly correct, there may be persons who require something more on the subject than the assertion of Parkhurst. This will therefore lead me into some investigation of the word as it is employed in the Old Testament, according to the references given in a Hebrew Concordance, which are of far greater importance to truth than lexicons which too commonly take the tincture of the editor’s theological opinions.

The Hebrew word *nephesh* occurs seven hundred times in the Old Testament, and is variously rendered in our English Bibles by the words *soul*, *life*, *person*, *creature*, *beast*, *mind*, *lust* or *intense desire*, *heart*, *yourselves*, *me*, *a corpse*, *dead persons*. The term therefore is applied indifferently to

either man or beast, and whether living or dead. It is applied to beasts in eighteen passages of the Pentateuch, and twenty-three times to dead or slain men.

The most important correction of the sense of this term to the mere English reader is in *Genesis* ii. 7, in which God according to our translation is stated to have breathed into Adam's nostrils, "the breath of life, and man became *a living soul*." These words are continually quoted by persons unacquainted with the Hebrew text to imply that God communicated a very different principle of life to mankind, as contrasted with that conferred upon other animals, and by a very gratuitous supposition it is still further urged that by *living soul*, immortality is to be necessarily inferred. The whole of this reasoning, however, must fall in the fact, that in the Hebrew text this very phrase *living soul*, is applied at least ten times to beasts in the Pentateuch, and though it is not so printed in the English text, yet it is for the most part offered to the choice of the reader in the margins of our larger Bibles.\*

Our preceding investigation is amply sufficient I apprehend to satisfy any reasonable person, that the Old Testament does not recognize in any technical sense either the words *soul* or *spirit*, as we understand those terms. The Scriptures simply imply the fact of human intelligence, their capacity for good or evil action, their passions, hopes, fears, &c. But the Scripture nowhere teaches or implies in what this intellectual or moral nature of man consists, whether it is material or immaterial, whether it is separable or inseparable from the body. In short it communicates no information whatever on the subject.

Previous to examining the New Testament as to its use of these terms, it may be proper to examine in what manner the Septuagint has rendered the Hebrew words; for as this Greek translation was made for the use of the Jews long before the New Testament was written, so the influence of the Septuagint was such that the Greek words expressing *soul*, or *spirit*, as used by them, were afterwards followed by the New Testament writers.

\* For the more complete satisfaction of the reader I subjoin the following references to these texts. I have put those words in *italics* which our translators have substituted for the Hebrew words, "*living soul* or *souls*."

The moving creature that hath *life*.—*Gen.* i. 20.

Every *living creature* that moveth.—*Gen.* i. 21.

Let the earth bring forth the *living creature*.—*Gen.* i. 24.

Every thing wherein there is *life*.—*Gen.* i. 30.

Called every *living creature*.—*Gen.* ii. 19.

Every *living creature* that is with *you*.—*Gen.* ix. 10.

Me and you and every *living creature*.—*Gen.* ix. 12.

Every *living creature* of all flesh.—*Gen.* ix. 15, 16.

Every *living creature* that moveth.—*Levit.* xi. 46.

The Samaritan, Septuagint, Vulgate, and Targum of Onkelos, have all rendered these passages *living souls* as in the Hebrew text. The Targum however, in speaking of Adam's creation, (*Gen.* ii. 7,) instead of applying the term *living soul* to him, says, "there was to the man *a speaking spirit*," by which phrase he evidently implies merely his rationality.

The Hebrew words *nephesh*, and *ruach*, as we have exhibited them in the preceding pages, are represented in the Septuagint by the terms  $\psi\chi\eta$  *pseuké*, and  $\pi\nu\varepsilon\nu\mu\alpha$  *pneuma*.

According to Schleusner,  $\psi\chi\eta$  *pseuké* in the Septuagint implies the soul, mind, will, life, breath, man, animal, dead body, I myself, you yourself, he himself.

$\pi\nu\varepsilon\nu\mu\alpha$  *pneuma*, according to Schleusner as above, implies, wind, spirit, soul, mind, presence of mind, anger, power or strength.

The Hebrew words are therefore well represented by their Greek equivalents as may be seen by comparing our statements of their peculiar significance.

In the New Testament the same uses of the words *pseuké* and *pneuma* are made as in the Septuagint, and the lexicographers of the New Testament all give as the radical meaning of the words—the idea of breath, wind, air. Hence  $\psi\chi\eta$  is used to imply, life, living creature, animal, soul or spirit, mind or disposition, person.

In like manner  $\pi\nu\varepsilon\nu\mu\alpha$  *pneuma*, which expresses breathing, wind or air, is also used to imply the human soul or spirit, temper or disposition, evil spirit, Spirit of God, Holy Spirit, human nature as regenerated, spirit of the law, &c.

The word  $\pi\nu\varepsilon\nu\mu\alpha$  *pneuma*, has generally speaking a higher and more spiritual significance in the New Testament than  $\psi\chi\eta$  *pseuké*. It occurs three hundred and seventy-six times in the New Testament, the latter word occurs one hundred and four times.

Among the heathen Greek writers, I think the relative importance of the words was the reverse of that apparently employed in the New Testament.

But however the case may be, there is nothing said in the New Testament to justify the idea that either  $\pi\nu\varepsilon\nu\mu\alpha$ , or  $\psi\chi\eta$ , are ever used in any technical sense to imply the human soul, according to modern notions on the subject, for the words are used in the widest and most general sense as we have already shewn in our previous enumeration of their significance. We shall also find that these two words are used interchangeably to express those ideas which men have thought had a direct bearing upon the human soul or spirit as separated from the body.\* As this fact has an important bearing upon the technical significance that theologians have attempted to put upon certain passages of Scripture, I think it important to lay before the reader the following collection of every passage of the New Testament that seems to imply the human soul, as distinguished from the body. By this means any one can perceive that as there is no one word employed in a technical sense in the case, so under the very extensive use of the words in a great

\* I take this opportunity to remark that the interchangeable use of these words *pseuké* and *pneuma*, sufficiently disproves the notion that some persons have fancifully inferred from 1 *Thess.* v. 23; *Heb.* iv. 12, that mankind are constituted with an animal spirit, (*pseuké*), as well as a rational soul, (*pneuma*.) From the evidently synonymous uses of the words, as we shew on the next page, it seems clear that in the passages above referred to, the terms have been used pleonastically.

variety of other senses, we can only infer a general truth or principle which is incapable of being circumscribed by any technicality of signification.

The translations of the two Greek words are in *italics*.\*

Let us now in the next place see if we can ascertain from the Scriptures what takes place with mankind after death, for as the phenomenon of life is not elucidated in the sacred writings, we have no alternative but to investigate the contrary state of death.

The Scriptures however do not give us any formal instruction on the condition of the dead, though there are certain passages that have an incidental bearing on the subject.

The majority of christians consider these incidental passages and expressions to establish the fact, that the soul of man is in a state of active consciousness after death, and as such either enters on a foretaste of the happiness of heaven, or of the condemnation of hell, though neither the happiness of the one, nor the misery of the other will be complete, until after the resurrection of their dead bodies.

Other persons consider the true inference to be made from incidental passages of Scripture is, that the soul is not conscious after death but remains in the grave until the general resurrection.

Which of these views is the more consistent with Scripture we shall presently see. We will first exhibit the arguments of those who maintain the consciousness of the soul after death.

There have been some very far-fetched conceits entertained concerning certain passages of the Old Testament to justify the notion that the souls of men are conscious after death, which are vindicated by some apparent plausibility in the circumstance that the Pharisees held such a doctrine previous to the coming of Jesus Christ. That the Pharisees did hold such an opinion is indubitable, but that they had any authority from the Old Testament to

\* πνεῦμα pneuma.

Yielded up the *ghost*.—*Math.* xxvii. 50.

Her *spirit* came again.—*Luke* viii. 55.

Into thy hands I commend my *spirit*.—*Luke* xxiii. 46.

Seen a *spirit*. A *spirit* hath not flesh and bones.—*Luke* xxiv. 37—39.

Gave up the *ghost*.—*John* xix. 30.

Lord Jesus receive my *spirit*.—*Acts* vii. 59.

If a *spirit* or angel.—*Acts* xxviii. 9.

*Spirits* of just men.—*Heb.* xii. 23.

As body without *spirit* is dead.—*James* ii. 26.

*Spirits* in prison.—*1 Peter* iii. 19.

Ἄγκη pseukē.

Not able to kill the *soul*: destroy both *soul* and body.—*Math.* x. 28.

What shall a man give for his *soul*.—*Math.* xvi. 26.

Gain the whole world and lose his *soul*.—*Mark* viii. 36, 37.

*Soul* thou hast much goods, &c.—*Luke* xii. 19, 20.

Will not leave my *soul* in hell, (sheol or hades.)—*Acts* ii. 27.

His *soul* was not left in hell.—*Acts* ii. 31.

First man Adam a living *soul*.—*1 Cor.* xv. 45.

I saw under the altar *souls* of them.—*Revel.* vi. 9.

The *souls* of them that were beheaded.—*Revel.* xx. 4.

justify their hypothesis we cannot admit. That there should be a future life is indeed darkly intimated, or implied by very reasonable inferences from the prophetic writings. These intimations however only bear upon the subject of a resuscitation of *the dead*, they do not justify in the least degree the opinion that the souls of the dead had any consciousness of existence. The translation of Enoch and Elijah could alone authorize the belief that living men, by the power of Jehovah, might be taken to heaven in a glorified state, but their peculiar exaltation could not by any fair inference be assimilated to the condition of those who died, and whose bodies had decomposed into dust. Ordinary persons might hope to be again resuscitated, but they certainly had no reason from Scripture to suppose that their souls immediately after death were made partakers of the blessedness that had been conferred on Enoch or Elijah.

It is most probable that the notions of the Pharisees on this subject were derived from the considerations stated in the commencement of this article, respecting the non-exhibition of Jehovah's providence towards the righteous and wicked, which they sustained by as many inferences from the prophetic writings as they supposed would bear such a signification. I apprehend however it would be but a waste of time to analyze the import of the obscure passages quoted from the Old Testament, for as Jesus Christ is represented by the apostle to have brought life and immortality to light by the gospel, we shall be sufficiently enabled by an examination of the New Testament to ascertain what is the point of view in which this question is to be regarded.

Among the more prominent arguments advanced to sustain the doctrine that the soul is conscious after death, as well as being in conditions of happiness or misery, is the well known parable of the rich man and Lazarus, as stated in the sixteenth chapter of Luke's gospel. But what right has any one to assume that this parable contains a literal statement of facts? What right has any one to suppose that it differs from any other parable employed by our Saviour, which we otherwise universally admit to be only figurative exhibitions communicating instruction on moral principles, but which by no means imply actual realities in themselves? The entire short-sightedness with which men have insisted on this parable as being a real exhibition of future things is very remarkable, for if any one contends that it is to be understood literally, then both the rich man and Lazarus had very *material souls*, supplied with substantial organs, who had *tongues*, who could speak, and who preserved all the exterior lineaments of their earthly bodies so that they mutually recognized each other. In what manner the resurrection of their bodies hereafter could be of any advantage to such souls, I leave the reader to estimate.\*

\* Though it is a matter of no importance to my argument whether our Saviour did use this parable of Abraham and Lazarus, yet I have much doubt as to the fact. I have been led to this mistrust from the circumstance, that all his other parables illustrate essentially the nature, growth, and spirituality of the kingdom of heaven, and as such are adduced from simple and familiar subjects. This parable of Lazarus on the contrary, has no bearing on the subject, and is founded upon a

The answer of our Saviour to the Sadducees recorded in *Math. xxii. Mark xii.* and *Luke xx.* where he quotes Jehovah as saying, *I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, and therefore that "God is not a God of the dead, but of the living,"* is also insisted upon as proving the *conscious existence* of those patriarchs after their earthly decease. But our Saviour's words prove no such consciousness, and the true import of his language is only to be inferred as made in opposition to the doctrine of the Sadducees, who maintained the *entire annihilation* of man by death.\* Our Saviour's words only imply that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, still had existence, *i. e.* that they had *not been annihilated*; but it by no means follows they were in a state of consciousness. Our Saviour's words concerning them would be perfectly correct though these patriarchs might be in an unconscious state, for he alone introduces the phrase *I am the God of Abraham*, to prove that *the dead do rise or are raised*, (*Mark xii. 26.*) and not as determining the fact whether they were conscious or not. Now as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, have never been raised from the dead, we can only infer from our Saviour's words that they will rise at the general resurrection, and consequently nothing whatever is intimated as to their consciousness until that event shall take place. The argument was absolute and conclusive against the Sadducees, whose doctrine implied *their annihilation* by death, for if that had been the case, God could not be the God of what had no being, *i. e.* of non-entities, and therefore, when Jehovah said *I am the God of Abraham*, &c. it distinctly implied the actual existence of Abraham, &c. and by such an expression our Saviour says, Jehovah thereby taught *there would be a resurrection from the dead*, (*Luke xx. 37.*) All therefore that is implied by our Saviour's reply to the Sadducees is, that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were still in existence, *i. e.* had *not been annihilated*. But there is no authority whatever to justify the inference that they were in a state of actual con-

rabbinical theory of a future state and condition of things that are unsustained by any warrant of Scripture.

Furthermore, the parable stands in connection with a palpable confusion and interruption of our Saviour's discourse, which is broken after the fifteenth verse by three verses neither connected with each other, nor with what precedes them. Neither is it directly said that our Saviour did use the parable, but is abruptly introduced, &c. I am unable to learn whether a similar parable has been recognized in the rabbinical writings, but the complexion of it certainly accords with their mode of illustration much better than it does with that employed by our Saviour.

\* That the doctrine of the Sadducees was the total annihilation of both body and spirit by death, has been abundantly proved by Campbell. (*Four Gospels, note on Math. xxii. 23.*) The Syriac gospel has preserved the force of our Saviour's words correctly: "Then came the Sadducees affirming to him there is no life for the dead."—*Etheridge, Syrian Gospels, &c.*

This matter is furthermore evident from Paul's observation, (*Acts xxiii. 6.*) where he ascribes his persecution to his having advocated the doctrine "*of a resurrection of the dead.*" That this did not concern the resurrection of the dead body but the *existence of the soul* after death, is perfectly clear from the contest that ensued between the Pharisees and Sadducees, as is set forth by the reply of the Pharisees in the ninth verse.

sciousness. A man is in being although he be in a profound sleep, or in any other unconscious state that admits of resuscitation.

Again, on the Mount of Transfiguration Moses and Elijah appeared to three of the apostles conversing with our Saviour. This statement is also supposed to prove the consciousness of the human soul after death. There are however, many objections to the accuracy of such an inference, for in the first place, as Elijah did not die, but was translated to heaven, his re-appearance in a visible manner throws no light on the general subject. It is however, insisted that Moses died like other men, and therefore his appearance is conclusive evidence of the separate existence of the soul after death. But there is such a mystery concerning the termination of Moses' mortal career, that his case cannot be fairly estimated by the ordinary phenomenon of death. The account given in *Deut.* xxxiv. is, that Moses ascended to the top of Mount Pisgah, from whence Jehovah shewed him the promised land. It is then stated, "So Moses the servant of Jehovah died there in the land of Moab according to the word of Jehovah, and he (*i. e.* Jehovah) buried him in a valley in the land of Moab over against Beth-Peor, but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day."

By whom this addition to Deuteronomy was made it is impossible to conjecture, the general opinion of commentators ascribes it to Ezra, but by whoever written, it must have been done long after the death or disappearance of Moses as is evident from two passages in it, the first of which is, "but no man knoweth of his sepulchre *unto this day*," *i. e.* at some time long posterior to his disappearance. The second passage is still more forcible in the inference; "*And there rose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses whom the Lord knew face to face.*" This implies at least that many of the Old Testament prophets had already appeared among the Jewish people, for without many such persons had been recognized as prophets among them such a comparison could not have been made.

But under all circumstances of the case, Moses' departure from the world was preternatural, and under conditions of which we are totally ignorant. We cannot therefore, consider Moses to have died the ordinary death of other men, and as such cannot admit that his appearance on the Mount of Transfiguration justifies us in supposing that the souls of men in general are conscious after death.

There are also some exhibitions in the book of Revelations that are supposed to imply the consciousness of the soul after leaving the body, but this book is so eminently figurative, that I think it unreasonable that any thing strictly literal should be inferred from it. However, not to omit its statements altogether we call the reader's attention to *Rev.* vi. 9—11. This text represents the *souls of the martyrs* as being under the altar of God in heaven, and asking of him how long it would be before he would avenge their blood on those who dwell on the earth? The reply was as follows, "And white robes were given unto every one of them, and it was said unto them that they should rest for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." This representation certainly gives a consciousness of existence to the soul if it be

understood literally, but then again it is entirely inconsistent with the ordinary notions on the subject, for it represents the souls of the martyrs not at large and enjoying any happiness, but confined under God's altar, and crying out for vengeance. It is therefore, more reasonable to consider the exhibition in a figurative sense, which is in keeping with all other statements in the book.

Our Saviour's observation to the penitent thief on the cross, is also strongly insisted upon as proving the doctrine of the immediate consciousness of the soul after death. "Verily I say unto thee to-day thou shalt be with me in paradise." (*Luke xxiii. 43.*) But in this speech the all important matter is to determine where the comma is to be placed, for if it be inserted after the word *to-day*, instead of before it, our Saviour's words only imply an assurance given that day, *i. e.* in our idiom at *that time*, that the penitent thief should be with him in paradise, without specifying the particular time when; and since the ancient manuscripts are without points, no one has a right in such a case to insist upon placing the comma where it will make sense according to his peculiar notions on the general subject.\* This text therefore cannot be used in the controversy.

The last argument I shall adduce on the question as sustaining the position that the soul is conscious after death, is the observation made by Paul, (*Phil. i. 23.*) "For I am in a straight betwixt two, having a desire *to depart and be with Christ which is far better.* Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you," &c. This expression which if the fact had been proved that the soul was conscious after death would be very clear in its import, is by no means sufficient of itself to determine the controverted point; for to insist that it does imply consciousness after death and immediate communion with Christ, is a downright begging of the question. This observation however we restrict alone to the latter part of the phrase *be with Christ*; for the other part of the sentence, *to depart*, as if it implied the act of an individual about to take a journey or conscious passage from one state to another, is altogether a mis-translation.

The Greek word *αναλυσαι*, wrongly translated *depart*, is a metaphorical expression; it literally means *to be ungirded*, the import of which is *to be at rest*. The force of the metaphor is very intelligible from various portions of Scripture. In the eastern continent where men wore long and loose garments, they were incapable of active exertions until they disengaged

\* Persons unaware of the manner in which the ancient Greek manuscripts were written, must be informed that the Scriptures were originally wrote not only without points, but also without any separation of the words from each other. The following is the literal translation of the passage in question, which to prevent any cavil I have taken from *The Triglott Evangelists Interlinear Translation*, and which I have copied in the manner in which the ancient Greek manuscripts were written:

"ANDIESAIDTOJESUSREMEMBERMELORDWIENTHOUSHIALTCOMEINTHYDOMINIONANDSAIDTOHIMJESUSVERILYISAYTOTHEETODAYWITHMETHOUSHALTBEGINPARADISENOWITWASABOUTTHIETHIRDHOUR,'&c.

their legs and feet by tucking their clothes up under their girdles. Hence the metaphor in *Luke* xii. 35; *1 Peter* i. 13; *Let your loins be girded, &c.*

As having the garments girded or tucked up under the girdle was therefore significant of activity and exertion, so to be *ungirded* (*αναλυσαι*) signified to be released from labor or occupation of any kind. Paul therefore in the use of the word expresses simply his desire to *be at rest from his labors*, and the word ought to have been so translated.

The phrase, *to be with Christ*, is ambiguous. It may mean to be actually present with him, or it may be a mere phrase synonymous with being at rest, in expectation of ultimate salvation through him at the final resurrection of the dead. And this I apprehend was the meaning of the apostle as may be inferred from several passages of his epistles. Thus in this same Epistle to the *Phillippians*, chap. iii. 1—11, where he rejects every advantage he might have claimed as a Jew under the institutions of Moses, that he might win Christ: *"if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead, or from the dead,"* either of which translations is equally correct.

In like manner Paul remarks, (*1 Corinth.* xv. 32,) "If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me *if the dead rise not?*" Also in *2 Tim.* i. 12, he says, "I know whom I have believed, (*i. e.* Jesus Christ) and am persuaded that *he* is able to keep that which I have committed unto him *against that day*," *i. e.* the day of the resurrection and its consequent judgment, which the Jews designated by the peculiar phrase "*that day*." And again in *2 Timothy* iv. 8, Paul remarks, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, *shall give me at that day*, (*i. e.* the day of judgment) and not to me only but unto all them also that love his appearing."

The passages I have thus quoted cannot be construed in any manner to imply that Paul anticipated any reward or blessings immediately consequent to death. On the contrary, he evidently expected his reward only *at the day of the resurrection* when judgment should be passed upon all mankind, and this being the fair inference to be put on his words, it becomes evident that any ambiguity in the phrase, "*I desire to be with Christ*," &c. should be explained by passages that undoubtedly exhibit the expectation of the apostle.

But whatever may be the supposed force of those incidental passages of Scripture, which are thus referred to as supporting the doctrine of the conscious existence of the soul after death, every reasonable person must admit, that such an opinion becomes far less tenable than we have represented it, in the seeming impossibility of reconciling such a conclusion with many other passages of Scripture equally inspired, which *speak directly on the subject*, and which in that fact must rule every interpretation. Incidental or obscure expressions must be interpreted by what is asserted *expressly on the subject*, for it would be altogether absurd to modify the sense of direct passages by those that are incidental or obscure.

The first argument I shall offer to induce the belief that the soul has not a separate nor conscious existence after death, is founded on our Saviour's words as recorded in *John* v. 28, 29, where he remarks, "Marvel not at this,

for the hour is coming in the which *all that are in the graves* shall hear his voice, *and shall come forth*, (i. e. from their graves,) they that have done good unto the *resurrection* of life, and they that have done evil unto the *resurrection* of damnation," (more properly condemnation in its present sense.)

The inference to be put on these words of our Saviour is explicitly that the responsible personality of every individual man, whether he was good or evil in his life, remains in the grave until summoned by our Lord to come forth to judgment. And nothing can be more forced than the supposition, that our Saviour's words apply only to the inert material body which of itself is incapable of doing either good or evil. But as we shall presently shew there is a great misapprehension as to the fact of the resurrection of the body itself, the absolute force of our Saviour's words will be more fully appreciated when we shall have made an exposition of what Paul has said expressly upon the subject.

The state of the dead is universally spoken of by Paul as being a sleep in the grave, from which they shall ultimately be aroused or awakened by a shout or by a blast upon a trumpet at the last day. This representation is distinctly made, 1 *Thess.* iv. 13—17. "But I would not have you to be ignorant brethren concerning them *which are asleep*," (i. e. those christians who had deceased,) "that ye sorrow not even as others which have no hope," (i. e. of a resurrection.)

"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which *sleep in Jesus*, will God bring with him."

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord," (i. e. by his authority,) "that we which are *alive* and remain unto the coming of the Lord," (i. e. at the last day) "shall not prevent" (i. e. precede in the happiness of heaven) "them which are *asleep*:

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, *and the dead in Christ shall rise first*," (i. e. they shall rise from the grave, before the saints living at that time shall be glorified.)

"Then we which are alive and remain, (i. e. to the day of the resurrection,) shall be caught up together with them," (the resuscitated dead,) "in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall *we* (i. e. those who are living and those who are dead) ever be with the Lord."

The argument of Paul as exhibited in the second of the verses above quoted, is absolutely conclusive that the soul is unconscious until the resurrection. For to comfort those who had deceased friends, he assures them that those who should be living at the time of Christ's coming to judge the world, *should not enter upon the blessedness of the future world, previous to those who had already died in communion with Christ.*\* Would Paul have used such an argument if he believed that the souls of the dead had *already*

\* "We the living who remain at the coming of the Lord, shall not anticipate them who are asleep."—*Macknight on Epistles.*

"We which are alive, shall have no advantage above, or shall not get the start of them that sleep."—*Pyles' Paraph. note.*

"We shall have no advantage over them which die before that event."—*Barlee, Free and Explanatory Version of Epistles.*

entered upon a greater or less enjoyment of the heavenly rest? Would not the offered consolation have been that their deceased friends were actually happy in heaven at that time? Such is the consolation now offered by our clergy in cases of bereavement by death, because *they believe in such a doctrine.*

A similar exposition is made by Paul in 1 *Corinth.* xv. where he argues at some length against certain persons at Corinth who had taught the people there was no resurrection of the dead. But, says Paul, "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain, and then they also which are *fallen asleep in Christ, are perished.*"

But though there be no resurrection of the *dead body*, yet if the conscious soul of the deceased person had ascended to heaven, the individual would not have perished, but would be actually existing in all personal consciousness of his identity in the happiness of that state, and therefore, it is impossible that Paul could have made the argument ascribed to him, if he believed the souls of deceased christians were then in a conscious state in heaven. On the contrary, his argument distinctly implies that the personality of the dead christian, be this what it may, was then in the grave, from which it should be raised in awakened life and consciousness at the last day.

The advocates of the opinion that the soul is separated from the body and exists in a conscious state after death, have undertaken to affirm that what has been just quoted from Thessalonians and Corinthians, applies only to the resurrection of the material body, which they assume to be the same that was interred on the decease of the individual. Inconsistent as this attempted explanation is with the reasoning of the apostle, it is furthermore a down-right assumption of a fact which the Scripture no where justifies. There is no passage in the Scripture that authorizes the expectation of a resurrection of the same body from the grave, and the error by which persons have made such an inference arises from their disregard of the peculiar phraseology of the original Greek. The Scriptures say expressly, **THE DEAD shall be raised**, but it no where says that *the dead bodies* of men shall be raised.\* These terms are entirely different, and the distinction is clearly expressed in the Greek of the New Testament. Even the words in the English translation may be easily understood in their true senses when the peculiar technicality of the terms is contrasted. Thus Paul manifestly uses the term *the dead*, in a very different sense from *dead bodies*, when he remarks, (1 *Cor.* xv. 35,) "But some man will say how are *the dead* raised up, and with what *body* do they come?" Now the apostle certainly did not mean to say how are *dead bodies* raised up, and with what *bodies*, do they (*the dead bodies*) come, for he proceeds to shew expressly that the *dead body* as originally buried, will not be raised, for he compares the burial of the dead person to the planting of a grain of corn, and the resurrection of what was

\* The arguments in our text on this subject are essentially derived from Locke's second reply to the Bishop of Worcester, and the greater part of our remaining discourse is founded upon arguments proposed by him as published by Lord King, in his life of Locke: see especially vol. ii. page 144, &c. of that Biography.

thus buried, he likens *to the plant* that springs up from the grain that had been committed to the ground, and which he distinctly states differs entirely in its bodily appearance *as a plant*, from the *bare grain of corn* that had been sown. So it is, says he, in the resurrection of the *dead*: It is sown in one form, and it rises in another form and condition, *i. e.* the dead shall be raised with bodies suited to their future condition of being, but which differ entirely from those bodies which had been committed to the grave.

If Paul had intended to teach the resurrection of the original dead body from the grave, he surely would have replied at once to the question made in the thirty-fifth verse, "How are the dead raised up, and *with what body* do they come?" by saying they would be raised by the power of Jehovah with the same bodies that had been committed to the grave. But instead of this, his teaching implies the very contrary as we have already shown. Furthermore he says, in the fiftieth verse of this same chapter, "*that flesh and blood*," *i. e.* our present material bodies "cannot inherit the kingdom of God." If then our present material bodies cannot inherit the promised immortality, to what end are they to be re-organized and resuscitated from the grave? The unreasonableness of such an hypothesis the apostle still further exhibits to us in the clearest point of view, by informing us, that those devout christians *who are alive* at the resurrection day, must *be changed in their bodily condition* before they ascend to Christ. It therefore seems utterly inconsistent to suppose that the corrupted bodies of those who have previously died are to be miraculously resuscitated, when they are evidently incapable as such of entering the future kingdom of heaven.

There is furthermore an exceeding amount of perplexity involved in the ordinary notion of men concerning the supposed resurrection of the dead body. Such an opinion presumes that the soul on being separated from the body by death, passes immediately either to some intermediate state of greater or less happiness or misery, or else to actual heaven or hell. But if either of these notions be correct, it follows that both the souls of the blessed and those of the wicked, though each may have been enjoying happiness or suffering misery for ages of past time, do yet previous to the resurrection day leave both heaven and hell, find out their original places of sepulture on the earth, descend into the grave, or into the depths of the ocean, and put on their former corruptible bodies in which they are to rise from the grave. Soul and body being thus re-united then present themselves at the judgment seat of Christ, to be there judged according to their deeds, though the one had been already enjoying happiness, and the other suffering torments for some thousands of years previously. Now as there is nothing in the Scriptures to justify such perplexed suppositions as these, their very incongruity with any orderly constitution of things as exhibited in God's proceedings with mankind must be sufficient to assure us that no such hypothesis can be correct.

The cause of this great confusion and perplexity arises necessarily from the opinion entertained by divines and theologians concerning the separate existence of the soul and its consciousness after death. According to such a doctrine, *the resurrection of the dead* as announced in the New Testament,

only means the resuscitation of the dead animal body. But we contend that the true meaning of “*resurrection of the dead*,” is simply that those *who have died* shall again be revivified. It does not imply the raising up of the *dead body*, but that those *who have died* shall hereafter be revived in conscious personality of their former being.

In order to sustain these views more forcibly we must recur to the Greek New Testament, where the terms used are very distinct.

The Greek word for *the dead* is *νεκρός nekros* an adjective, or part of speech which every one acquainted even with English grammar knows to be a word expressing a *quality, state, or condition*. It is not a *noun substantive*, and as such by no propriety could be used as implying a *dead body*.

The Greek word *νεκρός nekros* occurs in the New Testament one hundred and thirty times. It is used only in the sense of one being either literally *dead*, or metaphorically so, as being dead to the world, in sins, &c. But in not one single instance does it ever signify, neither has it been translated in the English New Testament to signify *a dead body*.

There are several Greek words that signify either body, or *dead body*. First, *σῶμα soma*, and the context alone shews whether a living or dead body is meant, or whether it is used metaphorically. This word *soma* occurs one hundred and forty-three times in the New Testament. It is used in speaking of the dead body of John the Baptist, (*Math. xiv. 12.*) of Dorcas, (*Acts ix. 40.*) of our Saviour after his crucifixion, which is mentioned fourteen times in the Evangelists. In all these instances the word used is invariably *σῶμα soma*.

The second term for *dead body* used in New Testament is *πτωμα ptoma*, it occurs in five places, in none of which is it used in reference to the *resurrection*.

The third term is *κωλον kolon*, (carcase.) It is used but once, *Heb. iii. 17.*

It is therefore distinctly clear from the use of these different terms, that in speaking of the resurrection of *the dead*, the Scriptures no where justifies in the least degree the notion of the resurrection of the *dead body*, for if the writers of the New Testament had intended any such meaning, they certainly would have used the recognized terms *soma*,\* *ptoma*, or *kolon*, which distinctly express that sense. That they have not done so is therefore abundant evidence that they did not attach the sense of *dead body* to the term *nekros*.

Hence no inference is more direct from the text of the New Testament than that the *resurrection of the dead*, implies only the resuscitation of those *who have died*, and not of their *dead bodies*, for out of one hundred and thirty places in the New Testament where the term *nekros* is used, it is never employed in a single instance as signifying *dead body*.

\* The passage in *Romans viii. 23*, that speaks of “*the redemption of our bodies*,” (*σωμάτων*) has no reference to *the resurrection of the dead body*, but to the reception of those *glorified bodies* which the righteous shall receive after the day of judgment. The views of the apostle on that subject, may be inferred from his observations, *2 Cor. v. 1-4.*

As I apprehend our general reasoning on this subject is sufficiently conclusive, I shall take but little notice of those passages of the New Testament that are ordinarily referred to as sustaining the common opinion. The two of chief importance are as follows:

The fact of our Saviour's resurrection has been inferred to prove that as he arose from the dead or state of death in the same form in which he had been placed in the tomb, that it is a guarantee that we shall in like manner also be raised from our graves with the same bodies with which we are buried.

But this subject is altogether misunderstood, Christ was raised from the dead with the same body, lineaments, &c. because it was only through them that he could be recognised after his resurrection. If he had appeared in a different form or body, how could his disciples have known him. But that we shall be raised in our present mortal bodies is not only not taught in the Scriptures, but the direct contrary, as we have already shewn. We have also the observation of an apostle expressly to this fact, (*1 John* iii. 2.) “*It doth not yet appear what we shall be*, but we know that when he (Christ) shall appear, (at the day of judgment,) *we shall be like him*, &c. If the apostle John then did not know *what appearance* we shall make at, or rather after the day of judgment, how can any one undertake to assert that the apostles taught the resurrection of our present bodies.

Some persons have also attempted to sustain the doctrine of the resurrection of the *dead body* of a deceased person, from the vague and uncertain statement made in *Math.* xxvii. 52, 53, which speaks of “*many bodies of the saints which slept* having come out of the graves after Christ's resurrection, and went into the holy city and appeared to many.”

Whether these bodies ever returned to their graves,—whether they lived in the flesh and then died, or whether they ascended to heaven, we are not informed. All these particulars are essential however in bringing this verse to bear on the subject of the resurrection of the dead body, for unless they did ascend to heaven, their resuscitation amounts to nothing more than the resurrection of Lazarus.

Dr. Adam Clarke I should think doubted the authenticity of the passage in question from the embarrassment which he throws on it, though he was too timid to reject it. It is however rejected as an interpolation by many other critics and commentators, with whom I concur as being the most probable opinion.

The hypothesis that the dead lie unconscious in their graves until the resurrection day, then to be raised with a suitable material corporeity, is not only free from any embarrassment but accords perfectly with the statements made by our Saviour in *John* v. 28, 29, and what we have more fully exhibited from Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians and Corinthians.\* The

\* “For aught we know,” says Archbishop Whately, (*Essays*, i. 121,) “the soul may remain combined with a portion of matter less than the ten thousandth part of the minutest particle that was ever perceived by our senses; since ‘great’ and ‘small’ are only relative. All we can be sure of is that if the soul be wholly

dead are by them represented to lie in their graves in a condition analogous to that of persons in a profound sleep, from which they shall be awakened like soldiers who are roused from their slumbers by the blast of a trumpet sounded over them. The righteous dead, with suitable material bodies, are then resuscitated with a consciousness of their former identity, the righteous living are then changed from their present corruptible bodies to the glorified bodies of the resurrection, and they both ascend with Christ to enjoy immortality in that state of eternal blessedness prepared for the righteous from the foundation of the world.\*

As respects the condition of the wicked we have no precise information; we are not informed that those who live at that time shall be changed in their mortal bodies, nor how the wicked dead shall be raised. All that is communicated to us implies they shall be raised in personal consciousness, and that they shall then receive their condemnation from the judgment seat of Christ.

Our last investigation of this subject will be to ascertain whether the wicked dead and the wicked living, shall also at the resurrection day become immortal, for upon this fact the proof of the doctrine of the inherent immortality of the soul essentially depends. On this subject however we have no direct information from the Scripture, and the speculations of men on this particular are based exclusively on the significance to be given to the terms used in the Scripture as expressive of their final condemnation. That these terms are literally everlasting punishment, unextinguishable fire, &c. is indisputable, and consequently those persons who believe in the inherent immortality of the human soul, do consistently suppose that the torment of the wicked in hell must be eternal, for certainly there is no passage in Scripture that justifies the doctrine that the wicked shall ever be delivered from their state of condemnation. But if human nature is essentially *mortal*, the subject of the condemnation of the wicked will come before us in a very different point of view. Now from all our previous investigation we have

disengaged from matter, and yet shall enjoy consciousness and activity, it must be in some quite different manner from that in which we now enjoy them; if on the other hand the soul remains inert and unconscious till its re-union with matter, the moment of our sinking into this state of unconsciousness will appear to us to be instantly succeeded by that of our awaking from it, even though twenty centuries may have intervened."

\* That the earlier christians did not believe in the immediate ascent of the soul to heaven after death, is evident from the following observation of Justin Martyr. (*Dial. with Trypho*, sec. 80.) "For if you have conversed with some that are indeed called christians, &c. who even dare to blaspheme the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, and say that there is no resurrection of the dead, but that the souls as soon as they leave the body are received up into heaven, take care that you do not look upon these as christians; as no one that rightly considers would say that the Sadducees or the like sects, &c. are Jews."

Several other fathers held the doctrine that the souls of men slept unconsciously, they knew not how or where, till the judgment. Bayle, (*article Luther*,) enumerates Origen, Chrysostom, Theodoret, Tertullian, and Lactantius, as holding such opinion.

been unable to see the least proof that the human soul is inherently immortal.

If human nature therefore is essentially mortal, as we apprehend to be the plain inference from the Scripture, then the terms eternal punishment, everlasting torment, unextinguishable fires, are literally fulfilled by the absolute destruction of whatever may be subjected to an annihilating process, be this what it may. In other words, the Scriptures say the fires of hell are unextinguishable or everlasting, *i. e.* not as to their duration but as to their effect. They do not say that the wicked who shall be cast into these fires are immortal in their existence, and without this latter fact can be established, the eternity of hell fire justifies no other conclusion than the utter destruction of those subjected to its action. With this view all those passages of Scripture accord that speak of the soul being *destroyed or perishing*, terms that imply *destruction or annihilation*, and which cannot be understood in any other sense but by a direct perversion of their meaning, *i. e.* by changing a positive statement to one the very opposite of what is there made.\*

Furthermore, the terms eternal, everlasting, forever, &c. are continually

\* As some persons may have not considered the subject in this point of view, it may be useful to lay before them some references to the Scripture which involve the meaning of the words *perish*, *perdition*, *destruction*, *death*, in connection with the future condition of the wicked. "Whosoever believeth in him *shall not perish*, but have *everlasting life*." (John iii. 15, 16.) Here *perish* is expressly in opposition to *everlasting life*; is there any other state opposed to life, *than death*, or ceasing to live.

The preaching of the cross is to them that *perish*, foolishness.—1 Cor. i. 18.

With all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that *perish*.—2 Thess. ii. 10.  
Shall utterly *perish* in their own corruption.—2 Pet. ii. 12.

Not willing that any should *perish*, but that all should come to repentance.—2 Pet. iii. 9.

If Christ be not raised, &c. they which have fallen asleep in Christ are *perished*.  
1 Cor. xv. 18.

Reserved *unto fire* against the day of judgment and *perdition* of ungodly men.  
2 Pet. iii. 7.

If any man defile the temple of God (which temple ye are) him shall God *destroy*.—1 Cor. iii. 17.

Then shall that wicked (one) be revealed whom the Lord shall *consume* with the spirit of his mouth, and shall *destroy* with (or in) the brightness of his coming.  
2 Thess. ii. 8.

That through death he might *destroy* him, that has the power of death, &c.  
Heb. ii. 14.

The last enemy that shall be *destroyed*, is death.—1 Cor. xv. 26.

The wicked shall be punished with *everlasting destruction* from the presence of the Lord.—2 Thess. i. 9.

The wages of sin is *death*.—Rom. vi. 23.

To be carnally minded is *death*.—Rom. viii. 6.

Sin when it is finished bringeth forth *death*.—James i. 15.

There is a sin unto *death*.—1 John v. 16.

And death and hell (hades) were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.—Rev. xx. 14, 15.

The preceding texts become still more emphatic as contrasted with the follow-

used in Scripture in the restricted sense of implying merely the time necessary to the accomplishment of any purpose, scheme, or intention. Thus John the Baptist uses these very terms in his figure of the wheat and the chaff. (*Math. iii. 12,*) “he will gather his wheat into the garner; but will *burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire*,” *i. e.* the fire is *unquenchable* as to the chaff, it being wholly consumed.\*

We have however an express illustration of the meaning of the term *eternal* or *everlasting fire*, given us by Jude, seventh verse, “Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, &c. are set forth for *an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.* ( $\pi\upsilon\varphi\sigma\alpha\omega\upsilon\omega$ .) Now the *example set before us*, was the utter destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by the visible judgment of Jehovah upon them for their wickedness. As such it was complete in its effect.

To suppose that Jude means the condemnation of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah to *eternal hell fire* is wholly erroneous, for our Saviour has distinctly informed us that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah have not yet been condemned, for he has said that at the day of judgment, the scrutiny or investigation of their conduct, (*Math. x. 15,*) will be more tolerable, *i. e.* less rigid, than with the Jews of his own day. Their condemnation therefore is yet to take place.

A reference however to any Hebrew, Greek, or even English Concordance as to the meaning of these terms, will abundantly sustain our exposition, and indeed all christian theologians admit such interpretation of these words everlasting, perpetual, &c. whenever they discuss with the Jews the obligations of the Mosaic institutions, which employ these identical words in enforcing the obedience required by Jehovah to the appointments of the Jewish law. The absolute sense of these terms we have at page 21, &c. Vol. II. shewn to be entirely inconsistent with other express revelations from Jehovah, and are therefore only to be understood in their restricted signification. It is certainly most unreasonable for a christian to contend that terms which are repeatedly significant of limited duration in the Old Testament, must always be construed in an absolute and infinite sense in the New Test-

ing: He that believeth on the Son hath *everlasting life*, and he that believeth not the Son *shall not see life*, but the wrath of God abideth on him.—*John iii. 36.*

He that believeth in me *shall never die*.—*John xi. 26.*

He that keepeth my saying shall not *see death*.—*Ibid. viii. 51.*

The wages of sin *is death*, but the gift of God *eternal life*.—*Rom. vi. 23.*

To be carnally minded *is death*, to be spiritually minded *life*, &c.—*Ibid. viii. 6.*

He that overcomes shall not be hurt of the *second death*.—*Rev. ii. 11.*

On such the *second death hath no power*.—*Ibid. xx. 6.*

Is passed from *death unto life*.—*John v. 24; 1 John iii. 14.*

If ye live after the flesh *ye shall die*, but if through the spirit, &c. *ye shall live*. *Rom. viii. 13.*

\* That this phrase *unquenchable fire* was understood only in the sense of an intense fire that *totally consumed* whatever was subjected to it, is evident from the use made of this very expression by the primitive christians in describing the martyrdom of certain of their brethren. Thus Eusebius, (*Eccles. Hist. lib. vi. chap. 41,*) in two places uses the very words of Matthew,  $\pi\upsilon\varphi\iota\alpha\sigma\beta\epsilon\sigma\tau\omega$ , (*unquenchable fire*,) which has been translated by Cruse, an *immense or intense fire*, in which certain christians were burnt at Alexandria by their heathen persecutors.

tament. No one is authorized to put the absolute sense on these terms as employed in stating the condemnation of the wicked, until the point is settled that human nature is inherently immortal, or that Jehovah will communicate such immortality to the wicked.\* If these facts can be established, then I grant it will necessarily follow that the wicked shall exist forever in hell, for the Scripture does not intimate in a single passage that there shall be any deliverance from that state or condition.

But that the soul of man is inherently immortal cannot be established from the Scriptures. On the contrary, the opposite doctrine may be inferred distinctly, and hence I apprehend that as everlasting life or immortality is the reward that Jehovah will confer upon the righteous, so everlasting death, *i. e.* absolute annihilation, is the end appointed for the wicked, who shall first be resuscitated from the dead, and then be destroyed in all the consciousness of their intellectual capacities under the full conviction that they merit their condemnation.

We shall here bring our discussion on this subject to a close. It simply proposed to investigate whether the Scripture any where implied that the human soul was inherently or essentially immortal. To ascertain this truth we have examined the Scripture in its bearing upon the simple phenomena of life, of man's condition between death and the resurrection, and of the condition of the good and the wicked after the resurrection and day of judgment, and after all our research we come distinctly to the conclusion that the human soul is not inherently immortal.

\* There is a passage of Mark's Gospel that has been sometimes grossly perverted to imply such a condition to the wicked which I think proper to notice. This passage is in *Mark* ix. 49, where after having spoken of the future punishment or destruction of the wicked, it is then said, "For every one (the wicked) *shall be salted with fire* and every sacrifice with salt."

The best comment I have seen on this passage is by a Mr. Nichol Scot, which I have read in an anonymous publication entitled, "The Salvation of all Men." I quote it altogether at second hand. Mr. Scot observes, "Whoever infers from the above passage of Mark, that *the fire* is to perform the office of salt in preserving the wicked from corruption, by such a construction introduces the most preposterous confusion of figures, by representing fire, which is the most destructive of elements, as a means of preserving from *dissolution* those of whom the Scripture affirms shall reap *corruption or dissolution of parts.*"

"But furthermore, the salting of the sacrifices according to the Jewish law, were not to *preserve them* or render them *incorruptible*, for after being salted they were then *entirely consumed* by the fire upon the altar."

The whole comparison is evidently figurative and bears an explanation directly opposite to what the advocates of the eternal punishment of the wicked have put upon it. Thus according to Mr. Scot, as above quoted, "*Isaiah* li. 6 says, 'the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth wax old, or be fretted or worn out like a garment.' Here therefore the ideas of *consumption* or *dissolution* are manifestly intended, and what we render *shall vanish away*, is expressed in the original by a verb (מְלַא) which answers exactly to that in *Mark*, *i. e.* *shall be salted*, which as Buxtorf explains it shall be *dissolved*. And because things which are grown old and putrid are easily pulled asunder, we find a word of the same derivation (מְלַטֵּה) in *Jeremiah* xxxviii. 11, 12, to express *rotten rags.*"

It is clear however, from plain and direct passages of Scripture, that Jehovah will confer immortality upon the righteous and an eternal blessedness to them in the everlasting kingdom of heaven.

It also seems to me as the plainest inference from the New Testament that as immortality is not conferred upon the wicked, so they shall perish in the ultimate destruction that involves our world at the consummation of all things.

While this article has been going through the press, I have found to my amazement, that some persons consider my argument sustaining the doctrine of the annihilation of the wicked after the day of judgment, impeaches the attributes of the Almighty *as having made such persons in vain!!!* As I have regarded this subject only according to what the Scriptures appear to have announced, it never occurred to me that christians could require any other mode of reasoning than the interpretation of the revelations made in the Scriptures. If men however are absurd enough to bring forward objections to my exposition through abstract views concerning the attributes and excellencies of the infinitely wise and perfect Jehovah, I am willing to put the whole question on the issue, that if the annihilation of the wicked can be construed to imply that *God has made them in vain*, in what light must we regard the doctrine that he made them with the full knowledge, that *they were to endure misery and torment in hellfire throughout an endless eternity?*

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## ARTICLE No. VII.

See Vol. I. page 477.

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## ON CHRISTIAN FASTING.

ON the subject of fasting, nothing formal has been enjoined in the New, any more than in the Old Testament. Certain incidental expressions however, made by our Saviour and his apostles respecting fasting and mortifying the flesh, have been interpreted by very excellent christians as if implying that such practices had in themselves some inherent or beneficial tendency in promoting their spiritual welfare. In coming to this conclusion such persons altogether overlook the circumstance, that our Saviour and his apostles accomplished their ministry during the existence of the Jewish Dispensation, when fasting and bodily austerities were universally recognized among them as an essential part of that system of will-worship, that had gradually arisen among them as we have shewn in our preceding discourse. A tenderness to the weakness of the Jewish people under institutions that were to be wholly abolished after a few years, seems to have induced our

Saviour to pass such things by without any direct condemnation, though he has indirectly done so as being wholly inconsistent with the spirituality of the system inculcated by him. His observation (*Mark* vii. 18, &c.) that nothing entering the stomach can defile a man's soul, he thought was so evident, that he expressed surprise that his disciples had so little understanding as to require the subject to be explained. Is it not then very strange that persons should yet be found, who though recognizing no distinction as to the nature of their food, should still suppose they were spiritually benefited either in not eating any thing, or in merely eating what will barely sustain life; as if abstinence had some occult virtue in preparing the soul to receive that grace, which Jehovah in his infinite condescension has expressly promised to grant to sincere prayer. Paul also has instructed us, (*1 Corinth.* viii. 8,) "meat commendeth us not to God, for neither if we eat are we the better, neither if we eat not, are we the worse," and much more to the same purpose in other parts of his Epistles, all of which is a sufficient reprehension of the practice of fasting, and by necessary implication of all other bodily austerities. During the continuance of the Jewish state Paul however inculcated forbearance towards those who were weak and incapable of exercising spiritual discernment on such subjects. (*Rom.* xiv. 2, 3, 6, 14, 17.) But it is preposterous that such practices should be continued to this day in evident opposition to the intellectual character of the principles recognized by our Saviour.

The only important misapplication of a New Testament text as quoted to justify fasting, that requires any special confutation, is the inference deduced from our Saviour's words to the Pharisees, (*Math.* ix. 15,) when they enquired why his disciples did not fast as they and the disciples of John were accustomed to do.

Before we comment on our Saviour's reply, we must call the reader's attention to the fact that a Jewish fast did not consist in mere diminution, or in mere abstinence from food, but comprehended various other particulars of bodily discomfort as we have shewn, Vol. I. 474. Hence the inquiry of the Pharisees of our Saviour was not as to the mere point why he and his disciples *did not abstain from food*, but why they did not discomfort and afflict themselves as matters of religious obligation. To this question our Lord replied by asking them if persons ever fasted, *i. e.* afflicted themselves, at a wedding? Implying thereby that there was a time for all things; for he added, that when the bridegroom has been taken away, (*i. e.* has departed,) it will then be the time for his associates to mourn, or to be afflicted.

If by the term *bridegroom*, our Saviour meant himself, as most persons suppose, then his observation was not *a commandment* but *a prediction*, implying that when he should be taken away from his disciples, they would have to endure many afflictions and discomforts in the persecutions that would inevitably follow them as being his adherents. If this construction be rejected, then the only admissible inference from our Saviour's words is, that in consequence of their master being taken away, the disciples would fast, *i. e.* mourn, on account of *their personal bereavement*. But by no rational construction of our Saviour's words can it be inferred, that fasting

was thus appointed by Christ as a means by which men were to receive grace from God; which is the theory upon which fasting is advocated by persons of the present day.

That the primitive christians did not understand our Saviour's words in this latter sense, is evident from their practice, which was that they superstitiously observed a fast in commemoration of Christ, as the bridegroom, having been taken away from them when *he was crucified*, and when on being restored by *his resurrection*, they then rejoiced in the festivities of Easter.—See *Lord King, Prim. Church, second part*, 134, *Bingham, Antiq. &c. lib. xxi. chap. i.*

Another passage of the New Testament as approving of fasting, is quoted from the history of Cornelius the Roman centurion, who says, while I was *fasting*, an angel of God appeared unto me, &c. Nothing however, seems to me more unjustifiable than the inference deduced from this statement, for the angel does not recognize his *fasting* to have been of any profit to him, but expressly states that his *prayers and alms* had been his memorial before God. See *Acts x. 4, 31*, together with Peter's comment at *verses 34, 35*, as shewing the principle by which God regards mankind.

There is another passage in the New Testament that is not quoted as any authority for christian fasting, but as implying that there is a peculiar sanctification of our nature by so doing, and hence it is inferred that fasting has a kind of virtue *opere operato*. This conclusion is deduced from *Math. xvii. 21*, and the parallel passages in *Mark* and *Luke*, in which it is related, that our Saviour in answer to a question made by his disciples why they could not cast out an evil spirit, replied, *Howbeit this sort cometh not forth but by fasting and prayer*. That this observation is an interpolation is manifest from our Saviour's words in the twentieth verse, which not only states that their inability to perform the miracle in question, was *from their want of faith*, but he further informs them that *nothing was impossible to a faith properly directed*. To add to such an assertion of our Lord's any other cause of their failure, is so positively contrary to his direct explanation that I should presume no reasonable man can hesitate in regarding the twenty-first verse, and the parallel passages in *Mark* and *Luke* to be interpolations. I apprehend the verse in question to have been originally an observation put in the margin of an ancient manuscript of *Matthew's gospel*, by some one who could not comprehend how our Saviour's disciples had failed to perform this miracle, and to save their honor in the case, the matter was salved over as if the miracle in question required some peculiar personal holiness on their part, for which they were not at that time prepared from some accidental circumstance. The same consideration induced the incorporation of this explanation into the parallel places of the other evangelists.

I do not think it worth while to discuss the force of any other passages of the New Testament that mention *fasting* incidentally, for I apprehend I have sufficiently explained that matter in the preliminary observations to this article. Fasting was one part of the Jewish system of will-worship that extensively prevailed at the time of our Saviour's advent, and as such it exerted a habitual influence afterwards upon the converts from *Judaism* to *Christianity*, and through them also affected those from the *Gentiles*.

## ARTICLE No. VIII.

See Vol. II. page 17.

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## ON THE DOCTRINE OF NOT REVENGING INJURIES.

I INFORMED the reader when treating on this subject, that I had a few remarks to make upon the construction which has been put upon *Math. v. 39—42*, by the Society of Friends, who insist that it forbids christians to resist any personal violence or injustice offered to them by unprincipled men.

Our Saviour's words are, “But I say unto you that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh of thee, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away.”

That Christ could have required his disciples to obey these principles literally, seems incredible, for it would reduce his followers to the most abject destitution that it is possible to imagine. Indeed the literal construction is so evidently incorrect that no christians have ever pretended to obey them. The Society of Friends alone, in justifying their doctrine against resisting personal violence, quote the thirty-ninth verse but they go no further, yet the requirement of the other verses is equally absolute as the thirty-ninth. If then a different construction from the literal signification be put upon the fortieth, forty-first and forty-second verses, why insist upon giving a literal meaning to the thirty-ninth exclusively? Let us bring home this matter by urging the consequences of a literal interpretation. Christ says absolutely and peremptorily, “give to him that asketh thee.” Is a man then to give away his house, or his cattle, or his money, as long as he has such property, to any one that will ask it of him as a gift? Is a christian also under an obligation to lend money without discrimination to every man, good or bad, that asks a loan? Is a christian obliged, whenever any one good or bad may see fit to require him, to forsake his own business and the support of his family, and to give his strength to do the work, or go on a journey for any one who might see fit to ask such service. Surely if our understanding rejects such interpretations, why should it be supposed that Christ requires a man to submit to personal robbery, or abject submission to violent and unjust men who may offer direct violence to him, or to his wife or daughters. Or, is a christian to stand by and see another christian abused and injured by any unprincipled violator of human rights.

Common sense plainly indicates that Christ could not have inculcated any such doctrine as this. However much aggression on the part of christians

is forbidden and forbearance inculcated, it is evidently unreasonable to suppose there are to be no limitations to endurance. There is consequently a proper time when we are to defend ourselves, our rights, our property, whether against an individual, an oppressive government, or an invading enemy.\*

I may also appeal to Christ's own conduct and words as contradicting the argument of the Friends on this subject. When he was struck on the face (*John xviii. 23*) he did not turn the other cheek, but asked why he had been struck. In the garden of Gethsemane among the last admonitions he gave his disciples, (*Luke xxii. 35, 36,*) after having appealed to their experience of the supernatural protection that had been hitherto extended to them though they went forth without purse, or scrip, or staff; he then informed them that henceforth they must take care of themselves. “But now he that hath a purse let him take it, and likewise his scrip, and he that hath no sword let him sell his garment and buy one.”

\* That there was nothing repulsive to the ordinary sentiments of mankind in the meaning conveyed by our Saviour's words, as already quoted, is furthermore evident from the comment of Celsus, the heathen philosopher, on them, who said, (*Orig. Contra. Cels. tib. v. chap. 273,*) that it was only a gross way of expressing what Plato had long previously stated in the dialogue between Socrates and Crito; which he quotes, although it is little to the purpose. But however this may be, it is perfectly clear that Celsus interpreted our Saviour's words in a reasonable sense and not as understood literally. Had he regarded them in that light, he would assuredly have urged them in his attack on Christianity as being so unreasonable as to be utterly impracticable.

Celsus also says of our Saviour's expression, “it was as difficult for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven, as for a camel to go through the eye of a needle,” that the observation was manifestly taken from Plato, &c. (*Orig. Contra. Cels. tib. vi. chap. 286.*) These instances sufficiently shew that the use of hyperbolical expressions in those days were perfectly comprehended in their practical meaning.

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## ARTICLE No. IX.

See Vol. II. page 176, (note.)

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### ON THE SUBJECT OF MIRACLES AFTER THE TIMES OF THE APOSTLES.

MIDDLETON in his “Free Inquiry into the Miraculous Powers of the Primitive Church,” has entered more largely into this investigation than any other writer that I know of. He has shewn very satisfactorily that there is no allusion or reference in any of the “apostolical fathers” to the performance of miracles in their day.

In the ensuing age, however, we find rumors of miracles performed among christians by men, women, boys, &c. on various occasions, though mentioned in such general terms that there is no satisfactory specification of the subject, and liable to this great objection, that while it would seem that almost any christian could work miracles, yet that none of those more eminent christians whose writings have come down to us, either wrought miracles themselves, or had seen them wrought by others. All they say is that there were such rumors among christians.

Middleton then very justly argues, that our reliance upon the credibility of Justin Martyr, Tertullian and others, in relating such things, is to be founded not upon their integrity, but upon their *judgment and capacity in appreciating public reports*. He then shews them to have been often injudicious, and very credulous, and since they had not seen such things themselves, he concludes they had confided in exaggerated reports which in reality had no miraculous character.\* How easily an honest but credulous person might fall into such errors, he very happily illustrates from the full persuasion of our forefathers only two centuries back concerning witchcraft, the miracles performed at the tomb of the Abbé Paris, &c.

But the most powerful argument of Middleton is, that though the writers of the second, third and fourth centuries speak of miracles in profusion, and those of the greatest kind, such as resuscitating the dead, yet there is not a single instance related of any man being qualified by the Holy Spirit with the *gift of tongues*; the miracle of all others the most essential towards enabling men at those times to preach the gospel and convert the heathen. Now as miracles have no other object than as they tend to the conversion of mankind, is it credible that this miracle of speaking in various languages should have been withheld from devout christian missionaries, while men, women, children, bones of martyrs, and the rags they wore, should have been able to manifest the supernatural power of God by healing all manner of diseases, and in raising the dead?

There is an absurd objection sometimes urged against Middleton's arguments, that they would also prove the miracles related in the New Testament to be incredible. This fallacy proceeds from the notion that the truth of the New Testament is established by the miracles therein related; but this error we have exposed, Vol. I. 111, &c. by shewing that the *relation of miracles* proves nothing. We must first be convinced of the credibility of the narrator before we can believe the miracles occurred.

\* But although I see no evidence to justify the belief that any miracles were performed after the death of those persons upon whom the apostles had laid their hands, yet I can see abundant reason why the christians of the second and even third century should continue to believe that they were still performed. Bishop Kaye in the preface to his *Eccles. Hist.* illustrated from writings of Tertullian, has well remarked, that "we usually infer what will be from what has been, and thus christians living towards the end of the second century who had either themselves conversed, or had heard the accounts of others who had conversed with men who had witnessed the exercise of miraculous powers, could not be justly charged with credulity for expecting the continuance of the same powers in the church."

It seems to me however, that there is a still greater objection to the belief in any miracles after the apostolic age, in the very circumstance of their reported number under all conditions of things as contrasted with the limited powers that our Saviour's immediate apostles or disciples were able to exercise in such particulars. It is evident Paul had not the ability to perform miracles at pleasure, as must be inferred from certain passages in his epistles concerning some of his friends that were sick.—*Philip.* ii. 27; *2 Tim.* iv. 20.

But there is a remarkable statement on this subject in the New Testament that seems to me to have been wholly overlooked, which is very important in the inference to be deduced from it respecting the performance of miracles in times posterior to the apostles.

There is a relation made in *Math.* xvii. 17, which is also confirmed by *Mark* and *Luke*, that a certain man had brought his son to the disciples of our Lord that he might be healed of a sore affliction, and that *they were unable to relieve him*. The father then besought our Saviour personally to heal him, telling him at the same time, that he had brought him to his disciples and that they could not cure him; *by which it is evident they had tried to do so, but had failed*.

On hearing this statement our Lord exclaimed, addressing himself *to the disciples*, and not to the people, O faithless (*i. e.* deficient in faith) and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, how long shall *I suffer you*, (*i. e.* uphold or sustain you,) bring him to me.” This was done and the child was immediately healed.

As soon as the disciples had a private opportunity they enquired of our Lord, *how they had failed to perform this miracle*; for this is the meaning of their words, “why could we not cast him (the evil spirit) out.” And Jesus then distinctly told them that it was “*because of their unbelief*.”

I apprehend the explanation of this remarkable circumstance to be this, the disciples instead of distinctly recognizing God as the exclusive mean by which their supernatural powers were effected, had inconsiderately attempted to perform this miracle in a kind of *ex-officio* manner, as if possessing a power to do what they attempted, and they were reproved in the matter by a signal failure before the multitude. Our Saviour tells them explicitly that they had failed *because of their unbelief*. But unbelief could only be charged on the disciples in that *particular transaction*, for as a general fact they did believe, as they shewed by their adherence to Christ.\*

The principle involved in this failure may be clearly understood by an event in the history of Moses and Aaron, (*Num.* xx. 8—12.) God had told them at Meribah to *speak to the rock*, and that it should send forth a stream of water. But instead of doing so, Moses in an angry manner struck the rock with his rod. In this case the miracle was nevertheless accomplished, but because Moses and Aaron had acted as if by a kind of *ex-officio* power,

\* There has been a verse interpolated in *Math.* xvii. 21—to salve the credit of the disciples in failing to perform this miracle, as if requiring the superior personal holiness, of *prayer and fasting*, which they were not then prepared for. That this verse is an interpolation I think is sufficiently shewn in Appendix Art. No. 7.

and had not glorified God in the performance, he punished them both by excluding them from entering into the promised land.

If such was the proceeding of Jehovah towards Moses and Aaron, or towards the immediate disciples of our Saviour, how can we credit the profuse relations of miracles stated in second and third centuries, which were performed by all sorts of persons, and even by rags and bones of reputed holy persons.

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## A R T I C L E N o. X.

See Vol. II. page 414, (note.)

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### SOME EXTRACTS FROM BISHOP HOADLY'S DEDICATION, &c. TO POPE CLEMENT XI.

(*Hoadly's Works*, I. 538.)

“YOUR Holiness is not aware how near the churches of us Protestants have at length come to those privileges and perfections which you boast of as peculiar to your own, &c. *You cannot err in any thing you determine, and we never do. That is, you are infallible and we are always in the right, &c.* The reason why we do not openly set up an infallibility is because we can do without it. Authority results as well from power as from right, and a majority of votes is as strong a foundation for it as infallibility itself. Councils that *may err, never do.* And besides, being composed of men (clergy) whose business it is to be in the right, it is very immodest for any private person to think them not so, because this is to set up a private corrupted understanding above a public uncorrupted judgment.

“As for us of the Church of England, we have bishops in a succession as certainly uninterrupted from the apostles, *as your church could communicate it to us*, and upon this bottom which makes US a true church, WE have a right to separate from you, but no persons living have any right to differ or separate from US.

“There was no necessity in your church to discharge the Scripture as a rule of faith open to all christians, and to set up the church, (i. e. the Catholic,) in distinction to them, &c. For at the same time that we are contending for the right of the people to search and consider the gospel for themselves, it is but taking care in some other of our controversies to fix it upon them, that they must not abuse this right, and that they *must not pretend to be wiser than their superiors*,” (the clergy,) “that they must take care to understand *particular texts* as the church understands them, and as their guides (the clergy) who have an *interpretative authority*, explain them.

“Thus it is in the North as well as the South; abroad as well as at home.

All maintain the exercise of the same authority in themselves, which yet they know not how to speak of in others without ridicule.

"In England it stands thus: The Church of Scotland hath nothing of a true authority, and is very much out in its scheme of doctrines, worship, and government. But the Church of England is vested with all authority, and justly challenges all obedience.

"If one crosses a river in the North," (i. e. goes into Scotland,) "it stands thus. The Church of England is not enough reformed; its doctrines, worship, and government, have too much of Anti-christian Rome in them. But the Kirk of Scotland hath *a divine right from its only head, Jesus Christ*, to meet and to enact what to it shall seem fit for the good of *his church*."<sup>\*</sup>

\* That the temper of the clergy has not changed from what they were as exhibited above by Bishop Hoadly more than a hundred years ago, is abundantly clear from the assumption of the Church of Scotland, as stated in a work published in that country in the year 1841, entitled "*Headship of Christ*," page 24.

"The dogmatic power," (i. e. of the church,) "denotes the power of the church *authoritatively to declare the mind of God as revealed in the Holy Scriptures*. And when we say that it is not absolute or autocratic but ministerial, we mean to affirm that the church acts simply as an interpreter of the sacred oracles, and claims no right to lord it over the consciences of men; nor to promulgate any articles of faith simply on her own authority."

Never was there a more Jesuitical exposition than this, for it will sustain the most arbitrary assumptions on the ground that the clergy of the Church of Scotland *have authority* to interpret the word of God. In what respect does this differ from the assumptions of Popery? The Popes claim to have no authority in themselves independent of the power conferred on them by the word of God, and refer us to the Scripture for their proof of the fact.

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## ARTICLE No. XI.

See Vol. II. page 418, (note.)

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## ON THE ORIGIN OF THE DEISTS.

THE history of the origin of the deists is not an unimportant matter in an account of the developments of Christianity. The influence of their writings upon Christendom involves some very interesting considerations respecting certain intellectual and moral phenomena exhibited in Catholic or Protestant countries since the Reformation, which will abundantly convince us, that as mankind as intellectual and moral free agents have been appointed by their Creator to accomplish their salvation through their own voluntary action, so nothing can be beneficially established in the social or intellectual constitution of human society that does not rest upon the foundations of truth, reason and justice. These fundamental principles may apparently

be dispensed with for a time, through the exercise of arbitrary power or the misdirection of popular opinion, but the disregard of them will be followed by consequences that sooner or later will test the strength of every condition of things that has previously held them in abeyance. Nothing can more distinctly illustrate this matter than the history of the deists.

The deists, as a class, are of very modern date; the earliest mention I can find of them is in Bayle's Dictionary under the article VIRET, a French Protestant divine who flourished about A. D. 1560. Viret in the dedication of his second volume entitled "Christian Instruction," as stated by Bayle, makes the following relation.

"There are several" (*i. e.* persons in France, &c.) "who profess to believe that there is some deity or God, as the Turks and Jews do, but as for Jesus Christ and all those things which evangelists and apostles testify concerning him, they take them for fables and dreams, &c. I hear that some of this band call themselves DEISTS, a new word in opposition to that of ATHEISTS. For as the word atheist signifies one that is without God, so they would hereby signify that they are not without God, because they believe that there is one, whom they acknowledge for Creator of heaven and earth; but as for Jesus Christ they do not know who he is, nor do they believe in him or his doctrines. These DEISTS, says Viret, *ridicule all religion*, though they accommodate themselves to those with whom they are obliged to live, out of complaisance or fear. Some of them have a kind of notion of the immortality of the soul; others agree with the Epicureans on that subject, as well as on that of the divine providence towards mankind. They think that God does not intermeddle with human affairs, and that they are governed by fortune, or by the prudence or folly of men according as things happen. I am struck with horror," adds Viret, "when I think that there are such monsters among those who bear the name of christians. But my horror is redoubled, when I consider that several of those persons who make profession of learning and human philosophy, and even are frequently esteemed the most learned, most acute and subtle geniuses, are not only infected with this execrable atheism, (*irreligion*) but also profess it, teach it, and poison other persons with this venom," &c.

Viret appears to have been wholly unable to comprehend how this new species of infidelity had arisen, but the cause is very evident and its history very instructive.

With the revival of letters in the middle ages, and the consequent familiarity of intellectual men with the philosophical writings of the ancient Greeks and Latins, they felt the more indignant at the intellectual thraldom to which the human mind was subjected through the authority of the Catholic Church, then sustained by the ignorant superstition of the people, as well as by the temporal power of princes and magistrates. Hence however much avarice, ambition, sensuality and cruelty might characterize the history of the clergy, yet no one but at the hazard of his life could assail the abuses or the corruptions of the church. The inevitable consequence of such a condition of things was, that intellectual men to a very great extent became atheists. They disbelieved the Scriptures, God, and even virtue itself.

They saw that the whole apparent end of Christianity as then only shewn in the Catholic Church, was the exaltation of the clergy to temporal power, or as supplying them with the means of gratifying their sensuality. Here and there was an intellectual man who from having had an opportunity to study the Scriptures, was a believer in Christianity from a greater or less perception of the excellence of the scheme of revelation, however much he might mourn over the corruptions of the church. But such instances were few as compared with the numbers of intellectual men who scouted at the idea of the Scripture being any thing else than a priestly imposture to the benefit of a proud and sensual clergy. This spirit of utter disbelief among intellectual or educated men was so notorious, that it passed into a proverb concerning the physicians, then essentially the scientific class of men, “*quot medici, tot athei*,” i. e. “as many physicians, so many atheists.”

In the great moral revolt from Papal domination at the time of the Reformation, the class of intellectual men who had previously regarded Christianity as a downright ecclesiastical imposture, now felt themselves at liberty to express their hitherto suppressed opinions. They probably were in the first instance much perplexed by the proceedings of the first Reformers whose principles they did not understand, but as they essentially regarded them only as a new order of ecclesiastics who recognized most of the ancient doctrines, so they did not cease to judge of them by the old standard, and as such they censured with the utmost harshness of judgment every fault committed by the Reformers, every inconsistency of their conduct, every defect of their logic, and every infirmity of our common human nature. The infidel men of the day, therefore, soon began to disregard Protestants and Catholics alike, and gradually they stepped into the intellectual arena and assailed both parties by denying the truth of Christianity. They asserted the Scriptures were the invention of a selfish priesthood, that they only advanced the interests of the Church, or sustained the power of kings, who by the assistance of the clergy were enabled to keep mankind in ignorance, superstition, and bondage.

Most Protestants of our day refer this opposition of intellectual men towards Christianity to a mere unprincipled dislike of its moral requirements, and having adopted this opinion, they then inveigh against them as being without any justification whatever in their infidelity. For they assume that whatever may have been the abuses of Christianity, that every intellectual man ought to have detached these manifest abuses from the system, and to have studied the Scriptures in their simplicity; when if they had been desirous of knowing what was the truth, they could not have failed to appreciate the subject in like manner as all honestly inclined persons have done ever since.

But Protestants who reason in this manner are wholly unaware of the condition of things that existed before, as well as for some time after the Reformation, and which we must now endeavor to exhibit to them.

During the thousand years that preceded the Reformation, Christianity was a religion of mere prejudice. Men were born christians, they were educated by their parents in the *dogmata* inculcated by the church. The

church claimed to be infallible, and taught with authority whatever christians were to believe and do, and what they were to regard as false and heretical. There was no knowledge or science in Christendom; all were plunged in gross ignorance, all therefore believed what was taught them by the church, for they were incapable of reasoning and none consequently doubted. As literature revived and men began to reason and suggest difficulties, or require explanations, they were immediately opposed by the church in her infallibility, who taught them that it was sinful to doubt of any thing asserted by the church, and if inquirers did not submit to this exposition they were treated as heretics, and punished in whatever manner the church thought fit, who did not hesitate to send the more obnoxious recusants to the stake.

During the long domination of the Romish Church, there never was an effort made by her clergy to prove the divine origin of the Scriptures, as the foundation of the christian religion, by any argument addressed to the understanding of mankind. On the contrary, the laity were discouraged to read the Scriptures, and hence whatever belief existed among the people as to their truth, it rested exclusively upon an implicit submission to the assertion of the church. There did not exist in all Christendom before the Reformation, a single work that purported to vindicate the Scriptures as being a revelation from God.\* Neither is there any such work among the Catholics at the present day; none at least that is put into the hands of the laity.

As there was therefore no exposition then existing in the world in which there was any array of argument to prove the truth of the Scriptures, by which intellectual men might have been assisted towards appreciating their merits, the consequence was that whenever an intellectual man, before the Reformation, became scandalized or shocked with the arrogance, cruelty, of voluptuousness of the Popes or clergy, he never dreamed of the Scriptures in any other light than as being the vicious source from whence all ecclesiastical abuses and crimes had proceeded, and consequently in renouncing the Catholic Church, he not only disregarded the volume of Scripture, but he became for the most part an atheist, who believed neither in God, truth or virtue. He thus was competent to the commission of any crime suggested by personal ambition or sensuality, though this utter disregard of all moral principle was often concealed with consummate dissimulation, until his actions betrayed his true character to mankind.

After the Reformation, in the general expansion of the human mind which ensued from the cultivation of letters, and the free discussion of all matters connected with the Protestant movement, the minds of the more intellectual unbelievers in Christianity, such as exhibited by the Romish Church, had become so much enlightened by the spirit of the times, as to

\* Montaigne, in his second book, chap. 12, speaks in high commendation of a treatise written about A. D. 1400, by Raymond de Sebonde, a Spanish physician, which might induce some persons to suppose it was a vindication of Christianity. But from his observations, as well as those of Bayle, (article *Sebonde*.) it was evidently a physico-theological treatise, that only undertook to establish the fact of the existence of a God, by inferences deduced from the natural world against the notions of the atheists.

perceive the rationality of those inferences deduced by the ancient heathen philosophers concerning the existence of a God. This doctrine, at least in its external evidences, harmonized with the phenomena of the universe around them, while it suggested considerations irreconcilable with the scheme of atheism. The more intellectual class of infidels therefore, after this time began to assume the name of *deists*, in opposition to that of *atheists* as observed by Viret, under which term all unbelievers in Christianity had been previously known. The word *deist* however, is only a Latin term, a mere synonyme with the Greek derivative *theist*, implying a believer in a God.

As the deists thus rejected Christianity, they soon began to assail the Scripture writings according to what has been called "*the philosophy of common sense*," a phrase which though involving much abuse of "*common sense*," yet in propriety, means nothing more than requiring the advocates of the divine origin of the Scripture writings to sustain their opinions on the subject by argument or evidence, which is to be appreciated as to its force by the common sense perceptions of all intelligent and honest-minded men.

The attacks of the deists were extremely rude, and as they assailed the common foundation both of Catholics and Protestants, all denominations of christians felt the utmost exasperation against them as impugning the very principle of their theological existence. In Catholic countries, the civil arm which had crushed Protestantism as necessarily repressed the expression of deistical opinions, which however could not be extinguished. Infidelity therefore, in its worst form of atheism, silently and widely extended itself among the educated classes in all Catholic countries, though concealed under an external compliance with the forms and requirements of the church. How deeply the spirit of infidelity and atheism had affected Catholic countries, was ultimately demonstrated at the outbreak of the French Revolution, and of all those revolutions in Catholic kingdoms which since that time have been continually subverting the effete institutions of the old monarchies of Europe.

But the deists in Protestant countries could not be crushed down as had been the case with those among the Catholics. The very recognition of Protestantism establishes the right to a free discussion of all subjects whatever, and nothing is more odious to its genius than to silence a disputant by civil punishments. The deists therefore, openly assailed Christianity in England and Holland, and especially as involved in the ecclesiastical abuses that had obtained a footing in Protestant countries. They advanced, it is true, many unreasonable and even absurd objections against the actual doctrines of Christianity, but their heaviest blows fell upon Protestant Church Establishments, the pride and avarice of their clergy, and the intolerance with which they too often enforced submission to incomprehensible doctrines. The gross inconsistency of the Protestant clergy on such subjects, as contrasted with the express teachings of the Scriptures, was too glaring to be overlooked by the deists, even in their generally most superficial acquaintance with the New Testament.

The Protestants, therefore, were compelled to vindicate Christianity against the deists upon intellectual considerations; and now, *for the first time since the third century*, christians began to defend the Scriptures as the foundation of their faith by a reference to principles of truth and reason, instead of basing their belief on the assumptions of ecclesiastical authority.

So late however, was this work undertaken, of attempting to show the reasonableness of Christianity by deductions from argument or evidence, that the first book on the subject that I am aware of, was the treatise of the celebrated Grotius "on the truth of the Christian Religion," which was first published in the Latin language so late as the year A. D. 1630, and which led the way for the many able vindications of Christianity that since that time have been made known to the world. Through the combined influences of such writings as demonstrating certain truths, the purification of Protestantism from many of its earlier defects, and in the manifest increase of the principle of christian charity among its professors, the deists have been fairly driven out of the field of controversy in every country where Protestantism has had free development. Since the publication of Paine's contemptible Age of Reason, there has not been a single deistical work written during the past fifty years that was sufficiently reasonable to require a formal refutation.

That there is an abundance of deism, as it is called, in Protestant countries, is nevertheless true, for it is the appellation by which all irreligious men, who necessarily will be found in our probationary state of existence, choose to express their repugnance to the requirements of the Scriptures. So grossly ignorant, however, are they on the general subject, that for the most part they do not even know what are the ordinary arguments in favor of the theory of Christianity. The objections of the more intellectual individuals are deduced from the irreconcilability of the Scripture chronology with *their speculations* concerning geological phenomena, the dynasties of the kings of Egypt, and such like matters; while the mere common class of deists uphold their irreligion by scoffing at the miracles related in the Scripture, or by requiring the advocate of Christianity to prove the negative to any assertion they may absurdly make.

No man however, can be called rational in his notions who is not able to justify *his opinions* by a greater or less amount of good argument, and no one can be deemed either capable or honest, who is unable to state what are the strongest positions of his opponent, as well as concede to them the force to which they are entitled.

I know of no surer method of exposing the ignorant presumption of the general class of deists, than of asking these "men of reason," as they ludicrously term themselves, what they consider to be the strongest evidence in favor of Christianity? The mere irreligious man calling himself a deist, will be so embarrassed and perplexed by the question as to satisfy every one he knows nothing of the subject, and if he should deny that there is any evidence whatever in its favor, as some of them will do,—the presumption of such an ass in casting so gross an imputation on the understanding of Newton, Locke, and other eminent christians is so egregious, that any

by-stander of the least honesty, however ignorant he may be, can but perceive that such a deist has affixed the *broad arrow* upon his own capacity or honesty, and is totally unqualified to give the least expression of his ignorant presumptions.

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*Note to Vol. II. page 102, line 23, (accidentally omitted.)*

We have some very striking illustrations of this fact by the evangelists, but which as having been misapprehended, have been the cause of great perplexity to many persons. Thus John the Baptist, notwithstanding his preternatural birth, religious education, and divine commission as the precursor of the Messiah, and who he had expressly pointed out to the Jews, (*John* i. 29—31,) yet when he found himself imprisoned by Herod, and arrested in the work for which he had been appointed by God, he became so much perplexed by the circumstance, that he began to doubt whether Jesus of Nazareth really was the Messiah, or whether he was like himself only a forerunner to that illustrious personage. Hence his message to Jesus, (*Math.* xi. 2—6.) Our Saviour's reply was the exhibition of works and doctrines, such as no man had ever done previously, to which having called the attention of John, he then left him to draw the proper conclusion, whether as deduced from the consciousness of his own function, or from the extraordinary doctrine and miracles exhibited by Jesus himself.

In like manner our Saviour's mother and brethren, notwithstanding all their knowledge of him and his supernatural power and wisdom, yet as he on a certain occasion acted contrary to their notions as to what was judicious or prudent, without any reflection as to his previous history and action, they impulsively pronounced *he was beside himself*.—*Mark* iii. 21—31, &c.

It was the same thing with Moses at Meribah, (*Num.* xx. 7—12;) Paul's compliance with a Nazarite vow, (*Acts* xxi. 20—26;) Peter and Barnaba's dissimulation at Antioch, (*Gal.* ii. 11—14.) All these instances shew that whatever privilege or grace men may possess, yet their advantages never affect their personal responsibility as intellectual and moral free agents in a probationary condition. These anomalies of conduct are all solved by the observation made by Bayle, quoted by us, Vol. I. 327, (note.)



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